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Community And School Violence: An Ethnographic Study

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COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
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ABSTRACT

Community and School Violence: An Ethnographic Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relation between school and community violence. Specifically, this study attempted to identify factors that affect community violence as an agent of school violence and its impact on the climate of the school, by examining the attitude of at risk students who have come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System. The study took place in a large urban area in Northern New Jersey. A qualitative method of data collection in the form of ethnographic interviews was selected given the descriptive and interpretative nature of the study. The taped interviews were later transcribed and the verbatim analyzed and interpreted. Four male adults, described as juvenile recidivists, still in the juvenile system for offenses committed as juveniles were the main contributors to the study. Two district staff members also participated in the study which served to confirm the topics that emerged in the interviews with the juvenile informants. The verbatim was taken apart and reset in a collage around broad themes that pertained to school and community violence. The themes discovered became the data to be analyzed and interpreted. The analyzed data provided a window into the lives of the juvenile recidivists, allowing the researcher to detect patterns and elements pertaining to the topic under study. The findings from this research denote the experiences of youngsters having to cope with street life in conjunction with exercising their right to attain an education. The findings indicate that negative school behavior was not only an individual reaction to a particular situation but it was the manner in which the juvenile informants established, gained or maintained their status. The findings also revealed the juvenile informants' struggle with loss, family dysfunction, drug use, delinquency and hopelessness. Even with the daily survival of street life, the juvenile informants held on to the thought of obtaining a GED.

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You must live in peace among yourselves. And we would urge you, brothers, to admonish the careless, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, and to be very patient with them all. See to it that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but always aim at doing the best that you can for each other and all men.

1 Thessalonians: 14-15

Throughout my life I have received a tremendous amount of encouragement, support, and patience from my family and friends through the lows and the highs. The laughter always kept me going. I am deeply touched by their love and support.

To my Mom and Dad, for their sacrifice in fleeing Cuba so that I would be able to express my views in freedom and for instilling in me the thirst for knowledge. To abuela Meli for infusing perseverance, optimism and hope in my life, you'll always be in my heart. My special thanks to Marilynn for keeping me focused and for believing in me. I owe a great deal to Dr. Juan Cobarrubias for granting me the opportunity to achieve my educational dream. I will be forever grateful for his commitment, support, guidance and encouragement. To Dr. Nilda Bayron-Resnick and Dr. Shouping Hu for their time and dedication, thank you. To the

participants of this study for sharing their life experiences with me, I only hope I was able to do justice to their stories.

DEDICATION

In Memory of Petra Su

The person who influenced me the most, a woman of substance, of grand spirit and determination, with abundance of kindness and humbleness and for whom knowledge was an ever reaching quest.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

School violence gained prominence in the national news media as a result of fatal violent events that occurred in rural and suburban America in the mid to late 1990's. Schools in places such as, Pearl, Mississippi; West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Springfield, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado were the theater for deaths, injuries and arrests. But it was the violent events that occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton that stirred the national debate on the issue of school violence (Donahue, Schiraldi & Zeidenberg, 1998, Gibbs, 1999).

The fatal violent events that unfolded in 1999 in Columbine High raised questions for policy makers, the mental health community, law enforcement, families and educators alike. After all, Littleton, Colorado was not an inner city school and the student body at Columbine High as described by a student was perceived as "we are perfect, and the atmosphere is perfect"(Chua-Eoan, 1999; Pooley, 1999). News media coverage of the Columbine High shootings

was so intense that a survey by the Pew Charitable Trust in May 1999 indicated that the Littleton story was "one of the most closely followed stories of the decade" (Gibbs, 1999, p. 27). The fact that at the time of the reporting there were no identified reasons for the action taken by two teenagers in school may have contributed to the amount of time the media devoted to this story (Gibbs, 1999).

As with any other high profile crime, copycats followed. One month to the day of the Columbine shootings another violent event unfolded in a school in Conyers, Georgia. The violent event did not result in any death but six students were injured. The shooter was reported as being depressed. The feeling that violent school crime could happen anywhere provoked fears for parents across the nation (Cloud, 1999). Other students were arrested for making threats to blow up their schools in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Port Huron, Michigan and Spotswood, New Jersey to name a few. A Gallup poll taken in May 1999 found of the 37 percent students between the ages of 13 and 17, 20 percent indicated that their schools had been evacuated due to bomb threats. The copycat incidents were attributed largely to the news media coverage of the school shootings and the lack of reporting on the outcome for the perpetrators of such crimes (Cohen, 1999).

According to the National Research Council, between 1992 and 2001 there were 35 violent school related events which resulted in some form of shooting. The shootings differ in that some took place in rural, suburban and urban areas, pointing to possible different causes. In 2001, a Committee to Study Youth Violence in Schools was created by the National Research Council at the request of Congress. The findings of the Committee were inconclusive given the limitations of the available evidence. However, the Committee did outline some causes. In the urban setting the incidents involved specific individual conflicts known to the school. In the rural and suburban incidents the perpetrators seemed "aggrieved" and their grievances seemed to be against the collective school body. Curiously, policy responses in the cases studied by the Committee were more homogeneous than the circumstances seemed to be (Moore, Petrie, Braga, & McCraglin, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

The seriousness of school related violence, however, came sharply to light when findings regarding school associated violent death were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 1996 (Riley, 1996). The then U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley in a press release dated June 11, 1996 indicated that over three-

quarters of all deaths committed in and around a school were perpetrated with a firearm (Riley, 1996).

As reported in Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2002 (DeVoe et al., 2002), most schools in the United States are safe. The report cites that contrary to public perception, a child is safer in school than at home or in the community. However, the report indicates that a substantial amount of crime in school against students and teachers does occur and must not be tolerated. The report reveals that in 2000, 14 out of 1,000 students between the ages of twelve and eighteen were victims of serious violent crimes away from school. In comparison, five out of one thousand were victims of serious violent crimes at school or while going to/from school, indicating that children are at greater risk away from school (De Voe et al., 2002).

The National School Safety Center(2003) identifies and promotes strategies, promising practices and programs that support safe schools as part of the total academic mission. The National School Safety Center (NSSC) advocates for school safety, trains educators, law enforcers and other youth serving professionals in the areas of school crime prevention. NSSC has been collecting data on school associated violent deaths since the academic year 1992-1993, based on newspaper accounts. The National School

Safety Center's Report on School Associated Violent Deaths is a continuous report of violent deaths that have occurred on school property or school sponsored event, on the way to or from school, and on or off a school bus. The new school year as identified by NSSC begins on August first.

As of November 13, 2003 the National School Safety Center's Report on School Associated Violent Deaths cites a total of 348 reported school associated violent deaths. Out of nine identified reasons, the top four reasons for death include 109 deaths for unknown reasons, 90 deaths due to personal dispute, 58 deaths due to suicides and thirty seven deaths were claimed as gang activity.

The report identified eight methods of death. The top three methods of death were 263 shootings, 47 stab/slashing, and 18 beat/kicking. When the victims were identified by gender, the data revealed males to be three times more likely to be victims of school associated death than females. According to the report, high schools continue to be the setting where most of the school associated deaths occurred with 223 deaths, junior high schools followed with 55 deaths, elementary schools reported 37 deadly incidents and 15 deaths were reported at alternative schools. Eight deaths fell under the category of other.

The top five locations in which deaths took place were as follows: 81 deaths took place on campus, 81 deaths occurred near school, 40 deaths occurred in the hallways, 36 deaths occurred in the parking lot, and 29 deaths occurred in the classroom/office. The top five states with the highest school related deaths cited in the report included California with 75, Texas with 25, Florida with 21, Georgia with 18, and New York with 17 (National School Safety Center, 2003).

According to the American Psychological Association(1998), violence is a learned behavior which can be changed. Violence can be used as the reaction of choice for some people when trying to release feelings of anger or frustration, to manipulate someone and/or retaliate for pain or hurt caused by others. Some of the contributing factors to violent behavior include: peer pressure, sense of low self-esteem, exposure to early childhood abuse or neglect, a need to seek respect or attention from others, witnessing violence at home and easy access to weapons (American Psychological Association, 1998).

Violence is a community problem that is brought into school by children who may have been exposed to it via their parents, their community or both (Roth, 1998). Lack of parental supervision may be a contributing factor as to

why some children are more prone to exhibit violent behavior than others (O'Donnell, 1999).

Families that are unable to provide appropriate supervision have a greater tendency to have youngsters who exhibit anti-social behavior. The repercussions as a result of little or no appropriate family supervision are felt not only in the youngster as the primary victim, but in society at large. Lack of positive role modeling appears to be a factor in children exhibiting violent behaviors. Children without proper role models, often tend to develop their own patterns or norms for behavior (Cantelon, 1994).

Factors such as the victimization of the youngsters committing delinquent acts by their families, as well as, those exposed to multiple types of family violence need to be considered when discussing youth violence. Data from the Rochester Youth Development Study indicate that those youngsters who were victims of child abuse reported involvement in violent acts more often than those youngsters who were not victims of family violence. As noted by Thornberry (1994), higher rates of involvement in violent acts were reported by youngsters who had been exposed to multiple forms of family violence, in the form of domestic violence, a hostile home environment or child abuse (Thornberry, 1994).

According to the Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report, the latest National Report on juvenile data as of the date of this study indicates that from 1987 to 1993 cited by Snyder and Sickmund (1999) most of the growth in juvenile murders was in the number of older juveniles killed with firearms. The report notes a decrease in juvenile murders in the period between 1993 and 1997 to about 20 percent above that found in 1987. However, the proportion of juveniles murdered with firearms did not decrease during the 1993-1997 period. Significantly, between 1980 and 1997 the number of juvenile murders not involving a firearm remained constant (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report (2001) revealed that there were a total of 15,980 murders committed in the United States in 2001. The number of murders reported in 2001, indicate a decrease in the number of murders committed in the United States when compared to the reported figures in the Uniform Crime Report for 1997 of 18,200 murders. The information pertaining to murder, as reported in the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) for 2001 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2001), sees an increase in the number of murders from the prior year but continues to be lower than data provided in

the 1997 UCR report. The 2001 report estimates that of those arrested for murder, ten percent were under the age of eighteen (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2001).

In New Jersey, data for the year 2000 shows that violent crime decreased four percent while in the United States it increased by one tenth of a percent. Analysis of violent crimes in New Jersey for the year 2000 indicates that 19 percent of all the victims were between the ages of 20 and 24. Firearms were used in 52 percent of all murders, accounting for one percent of the violent crimes. Robbery accounted for 42 percent of all violent crimes. Juveniles accounted for 23 percent of those arrested for robbery. Aggravated assault accounted for 53 percent of all violent crimes in New Jersey for the year 2000. Physical force was used in 33 percent of all aggravated assaults committed. The second weapon of choice was the knife, used in 21 percent of the cases. The third weapon of choice involved in an aggravated assault was a firearm which was used in 14 percent of all aggravated assaults. In New Jersey, juveniles accounted for 30 percent of those arrested for carrying or possessing deadly weapons. According to the 2000 Uniform Crime Report for New Jersey, the violent crime rate in Jersey City is 12, considered high when compared to

the State's violent crime rate of three point eight (State of New Jersey, Division of State Police, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relation between school and community violence. Specifically, this study attempted to identify factors that affect community violence as an agent of school violence and its impact on the climate of the school, by examining the attitude of at-risk students who have come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System. The factors focused on include family life, school life, street life, use and sale of drugs, experiences with the Juvenile Justice System and goals for their future. The study was conducted in an urban area in Northern New Jersey, identified in this study as The City.

Some students, especially those from urban areas, seem to bring a great deal of anger and frustration to the school setting. The school setting, thus, often becomes the forum for the outlet of such anger and frustration, which in many cases is expressed as some form of school violence. Depending on the seriousness of the acting-out-behavior, many students displaying violent school behavior may end up involved with the Juvenile Justice System.

The juvenile informants who participated in the study had a history of poor attendance, limited interest in

school related matters, difficult family situations, violent acting out school behavior which resulted not only in suspensions or placement in temporary alternate education programs, but also in aggravated or simple assault charges, history of drug abuse and involvement with the Juvenile Justice System.

In many instances, the juvenile informant's record consisted of multiple offenses, regardless of the many interventions offered by social service agencies or the Juvenile Justice System. All of the juvenile informants had participated in violent events in the community, either individually or in the company of others. The violence they experienced in the community was as a result of street fights which generated aggravated or simple assault charges. The outcome of the community violence experienced by the juvenile informants ultimately resulted in days spent in the Juvenile Detention Center and a term of probation. Therefore, this study will examine the perception of these juvenile offenders as they experience the legal system, street life, the educational system and the juvenile detention facility, including how their status is preserved while detained.

Research indicates that most of those involved with the Juvenile Justice System come from a troubled family.

Lack of family support, unresolved bereavement issues, poor academic performance, high absenteeism rate from school, high dropout rate from school and peer pressure are some of the factors associated with juvenile delinquency. Although the informants selected for this study may be affected by some stress levels as a result of their backgrounds and/or experiences, this study does not focus on their clinical or mental health issues.

Traditionally, in the area of juvenile delinquency, data has been gathered for the most part in a quantitative manner without the input of the juveniles. Data pertaining to juvenile crime and school related crime is generally obtained from government sources. The data is often generated by questionnaires answered by the local law enforcement agencies regarding the nature of the police calls that are responded to. A problem with this type of reporting is that the questions in the reports usually have different meaning to each of the different jurisdictions answering such surveys. This discrepancy in reporting school related crime is also cited in the Annual Report on School Safety, 1998 as an area that requires improvement (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

Given the scope of the problem of the study and the descriptive and interpretative nature of the research there are no hypotheses to prove in this study; therefore the methodology used in this study is ethnographic. Through the use of ethnographic interviews the culture of the juvenile informants is revealed in a manner otherwise unattainable by surveys. The interaction with the informants occurs in a natural and unobtrusive manner. The goal is not to treat the informant as a "research subject". The atmosphere of trust created allows the informants the opportunity to reveal how they think about their lives, their experiences and other specific life situations. The ethnographic interviews allow the researcher to study the subjective world of the informants with objectivity as they moved between school and street life.

Significance of the Study

This study identifies factors associated with community and school related violence, and juvenile delinquency, from the narratives provided by the offenders themselves and school district staff members who have vast experience in the area of school violence. This study adds to the existing literature on school related violence by addressing possible preventive measures regarding delinquent behavior, policy and planning issues regarding

interventions, including the role of the educational system. It is particularly relevant for school administrators, school staff, the Juvenile Justice System and those in the community who assist in the design of policy and programs to address the issue of community and school related violence.

The Informants

The participants of this study were six willing adult informants; four of them were male juvenile recidivists who had reached age 18. In addition, two school district staff members participated in this study. The participating school district staff members had vast experience and hands on knowledge regarding the issues of school and community violence. Although the juvenile informants were the main contributors to the study, the interviews with the school district staff members served to reconfirm the topics that emerged in the interviews with the juvenile informants.

The juvenile recidivists had reached adulthood, but were still involved in the Juvenile Justice System due to unresolved offenses committed as juveniles. The juvenile recidivists were also involved or had been involved with the Juvenile Drug Court Program due to their use of illegal drugs. The juvenile recidivists also had contact with the school district's Zero Tolerance Program.

Due to their many years in the Juvenile Justice System, this study considers the juvenile recidivists to be experts and therefore, the main contributors to this research. For the purpose of this study they were considered juvenile informants. Their experiences stem from their participation in illegal and violent activity, whether alone or in the company of their peers.

The knowledge possessed by these informants regarding the issue of violence in the schools, the community and the County Juvenile Detention Center, and delinquent behavior has been minimally tapped. Their knowledge and experience was the driving tool behind this study.

The School District Under Study

This study was conducted in a school district considered to be the second largest urban area in the state of New Jersey; identified in this study as The City. After failing all levels of the state wide monitoring process implemented in January 1984, the local board of education was removed on July 26, 1989 by order of an Administrative Law Judge for failure to provide a thorough and efficient education (McCarroll v. Board of Education, 1989). The school district was taken over by the State of New Jersey on October 4, 1989. This local school district became the first in the United States to be fully state operated. The

actions of the state were in compliance with Title 18A:17A-15.1, Creation of State-Operated School System. Under the state takeover law, the school district's administrator was removed and local school board of education was replaced by a state appointed board of education. The State appointed board of education served as an advisory board only. Poor academic performance, high absenteeism, high drop out rate, inappropriate curriculum, fiscal mismanagement, influence of a strong teacher's union, a sense of strong local political intervention and political favoritism are attributed as causes of the state takeover (Foster, 1992). As of the date of this study, The City Public Schools continue to be operated by the State.

The total public school enrollment for the school district under study for the academic year 2002-2003 was 31,133. The number of students eligible to receive special education services was reported to be 4,520 students. The ethnic breakdown for students on register was as follows: 39.3 percent Hispanic, 36.3 percent Black, 14 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 9.5 percent white, and 0.9 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002a).

The attendance rate for the school district for the academic year 2001-2002 was 93.5 percent, meeting the

State's expected standard for attendance, a considerable improvement from its June 1999 attendance rate of 89.5 percent (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002b). The dropout rate for academic year 2001-2002 was 9.40 percent a significant improvement from its June 1997, 14.93 percent drop out rate (Educational Law Center, 2002).

The State Department of Education administers the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) to all fourth grades in public schools and the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) yearly. The State standard for passing is 75 percent. The fourth and eighth grade students are tested in the areas of Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. The ESPA scores for the academic year 2001-2002 for this district indicate that 71.0 percent of the fourth grade students met the State standard in the area of Language Arts Literacy and 48.3 percent of the fourth grade students met the State standard in the area of Mathematics.

The GEPA scores for the academic year 2001-2002 for this district revealed that 65.9 percent of the eighth grade students met the State standard in the area of Language Arts Literacy, 53.9 percent of the eighth grade students met the State standard in the area of Mathematics,

and 57.3 percent of the eighth grade students met the State standard in the area of Science.

This district did not meet the State standard in either the ESPA or the GEPA for the 2001-2002 academic year. However, improvement was noted in the scores of some of the individual schools (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002c).

At the high school level, the state of New Jersey requires that students in the public high schools meet the State standard of 85 percent passing in the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) in order to be able to graduate. The areas covered in the HSPA are language arts literacy and mathematics. For the academic year 2001-2002, the district failed to meet the State standard score. Data from the HSPA indicates that 73.6 percent of students met the State standard in the area of Language Arts Literacy, and 48.7 percent of the students met the State standard in the area of Mathematics.

The HSPA scores reported include six high schools. One of the high schools, scored at 100 percent in all areas. Whereas in another high school, in the area of Language Arts Literacy only 51.6 percent of the students met the State standard for passing. In the area of mathematics, for that same high school, 19.9 percent of the students met the

State standard (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002d). Only one high school out of the six public high schools met or exceeded the State Standard score in both areas (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002e). In general, scores for the ESPA, GEPA and HSPA continue to be below the State standard for this district.

Zero Tolerance Initiative

A Zero Tolerance policy regarding weapons and violence in schools was implemented in this school district in February 1998. The policy states that any student who carries a weapon to school or uses any item on their person as a weapon to threaten or harm another would immediately be removed from the school building. The school district set up Zero Tolerance sites to accommodate the students removed from their neighborhood schools due to violent school behavior. The Zero Tolerance policy also applies to students who commit violent acts against another person or on the school bus (Jersey City Public Schools, 1999).

In the 1999-2000 academic year, 327 students were referred to the Zero Tolerance sites. In the academic year 2000-2001 that number rose to 320 referrals and in the academic year 2001-2002 the total number of students referred to the Zero Tolerance sites increased to 399.

For the academic year 2001-2002, out of 399 referred students to the Zero Tolerance Program 149 were assault incidents, 98 were for possession of a weapon and 85 incidents involved threats (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002f).

A closer look at the 399 referrals being discussed indicate 213 were from students in the special education program, 115 referrals were from grades Kindergarten through grade eighth, and 71 were from grades nine through twelve. Students eligible to receive special education services made up fifty three percent of the students referred to the Zero Tolerance Program. Excluding the students in the special education program referred to the Zero Tolerance Program, the number of referrals gradually increases from kindergarten peaking in the ninth grade. The referrals decrease from the ninth grade to the twelve grade. A marked increase is seen in the fifth grade (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002f).

Parental Involvement

School districts across the United States are constantly attempting to improve parental involvement in the schools. This school district is no different. The district holds a citywide parent conference aimed at educating the parents about current educational and social

issues facing their children. The conference is held in the local university.

It is a well planned and organized event, one that provides the parents with transportation, breakfast, lunch, keynote speakers, and a variety of workshops. In addition, social service and mental health agencies are invited to inform parents about services available in their community. The conference is available to parents in the elementary grades. Roughly 800 parents attend, a success given the fact that in an urban working class area parents are usually at work (Jersey City Public Schools, 2003).

The district also has developed the concept of community ambassadors, who keep parents and the surrounding school community aware of what is available in the school district, always encouraging parental participation. A parent resource center is also active and well staffed.

Socio-economic Background of the Population Under Study

The community in this study is an area of 14.9 square miles in northern New Jersey. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), The City has a household population of 240,055. The median age was established at 32.4 years and the median income was \$37,862.

Twenty seven percent of the children in this population live below the poverty level. Fifteen percent of

children under the age of 18 were below the poverty level and 24 percent of the households in The City received public assistance or non-cash benefits (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Fifty eight percent spoke a language other than English at home and of those speaking a language other than English at home, 69 percent spoke Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The unemployment rate for this community in 2001 was 7.7 percent (Educational Law Center, 2002)

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) annual report for 2003 lists New Jersey as the third most expensive state in the nation for renters (Ben-Ali, 2003). NLIHC has determined that the fair market value for this community for an average two bedroom apartment is estimated to be \$ 1,061.00. The NLIHC has also estimated that in this community, 54 percent of the renters are unable to afford the fair market value for an average two bedroom apartment. The current federal minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour. In order for a renter to afford an average two bedroom apartment in this community, NLIHC has determined that the renter must earn an hourly rate of \$20.40 (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2003).

According to the Association for Children of New Jersey, in New Jersey, one of every eight children live in poverty, each week over 90 juveniles are arrested for a

violent crime, 30 juveniles are committed to a County Juvenile Detention Center and each day the Division of Youth and Family Services places about twenty children in foster care, residential settings or other out-of-home placement.

Over 12,000 children in this community receive Aid for Dependent Children benefits and over eighteen thousand children receive food stamps assistance. There were 317 reported child abuse substantiated cases and 760 reported family problems in this community (Association for Children of New Jersey, 1999). For the academic year 2001-2002, 24,409 children or 76.34 percent of the children in this school district participated in the free or reduced school lunch program (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002g).

Juvenile Drug Court

In the community where the study was conducted, the Juvenile Drug Court Program links juvenile justice with community treatment. Although the Juvenile Drug Court is not the intended focus of the study, it deserves to be mentioned since the juvenile informants who participated in this study were involved in the Juvenile Drug Court. The goals of the Juvenile Drug Court include reducing delinquent behavior of the alcohol and/or drug dependent

juvenile, optimizing the rehabilitative components of the Juvenile Justice System as well as the treatment system.

It is mandatory and pivotal to the success of the treatment plan and the Juvenile Drug Court interventions, that the parent or guardian fully participate in this process. A referral for treatment can be ordered for those parents or guardians who may have a substance abuse problem.

The Juvenile Drug Court Program is administered by the Superior Court of New Jersey - Family Division. The Presiding Judge in the Family Division and the Family Division Manager are the ones responsible for the management of the Drug Court Program. There is one Drug Court Judge and a Drug Court Coordinator. The Drug Court Coordinator reports directly to the Family Division Manager (Drug Court Program Office, 2000).

Limitations of the Study

First, the participants of this study were four willing male adult juvenile recidivists who were in the Juvenile Justice System for offenses they committed as juveniles. They were selected because they were thoroughly enculturated in the culture that was the object of the study. This study regarded the juvenile recidivists as "experts" on the topic of school and community violence.

Their experiences stem from their participation in illegal activity whether alone or in the company of their peers. The limitation of the sample of informants is in line with ethnographic studies that study unfamiliar cultures, where the amount of thick data collected, its currency and depth cannot be substituted by other methodologies.

In addition, two school district staff members were selected for similar reasons. They are experienced in the area of school violence and work with juveniles like the ones who were the subjects of study. Although the juvenile informants were the main contributors to the study, the data collected through the interviews with the school district staff members served to contrast and reconfirm many of the topics that emerged in the interviews with the juvenile informants.

This study was conducted following the protocol for ethnographic research. The participants were interviewed and their tape recorded interviews were fully transcribed. The verbatim collected became the data that was analyzed. The information provided by the juvenile recidivists as well as school district staff members is crucial to the understanding of topics related to community violence as an agent of school violence. The juvenile informants, given their involvement with the Juvenile Justice System and

severe acting out school behavior stand as true representatives of the culture and thus are valid informants on the issue of school and community violence. However, the understanding gained through this study may not be replicated in all other settings, given the cultural nuances of the various school districts and the diverse policies used by districts in dealing with school and community violence.

Second, this study took place in an urban community that is considered to have a high crime rate and a low socio-economic status. The school district is struggling with low test scores and changing its image after a State takeover. Therefore, the findings may be somewhat unique to this situation. Nevertheless, the topics identified in the study and the policies that can be derived to deal with issues of school and community violence can be of interest to most educators, school administrators and policy makers, because they are likely to appear in one form or another in districts with a broad range of similar characteristics that confront similar problems. In this sense it contains some important lessons to learn.

Contribution of the Study

This study adds to the existing literature on school related violence by addressing the relation between school

and community violence. This study attempted to identify factors that affect community violence as an agent of school violence and its impact on the climate of the school, by examining the attitude of at-risk students who have come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System. The factors focused on include family life, school life, street life, use and sale of drugs, experiences with the Juvenile Justice System and goals for their future.

The study addressed possible preventive measures regarding delinquent behavior, policy and planning issues regarding interventions, including the role of the educational system. It is particularly relevant for school administrators, school staff, the Juvenile Justice System and those in the community who assist in the design of policy and programs in addressing the issue of community and school related violence.

Definition of Terms

Adult - A person age 18 or over.

Assault - Any intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

Custody - The legal responsibility for and physical care of a child established by natural parenthood or court order.

Detention - The temporary care of juveniles in physically restraining facilities pending court disposition.

Guardian - A person other than a parent to whom legal custody of a child has been given by the court who is acting in place of the parent and is responsible for the care of the juvenile.

Juvenile - A person under the age of 18.

Juvenile delinquency - The commission of an act by a juvenile that if committed by an adult would constitute a crime.

Plea - A defendant's declaration in open court that he or she is guilty or not guilty.

Probation - An alternative to imprisonment allowing a person found guilty of an offense to stay in the community, usually under conditions and the supervision of a probation officer.

Recidivist - Repeat crime offender.

Violence - The act of purposefully hurting someone.

Violent Crime - Aggravated assault and simple assault, robbery, rape and homicide.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I, provides an overview of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study. To provide the reader with background information, a depiction of the educational system and demographic and statistical

data about community and school violence was supplied along with general information about a judicial adolescent drug treatment program. In addition, the listing of the limitations of the study, contribution of the study, definitions of terms and organization of the study give clarity to the premise of the study.

Chapter II sets forth a summary of the literature available in the field of juvenile justice, school and community violence.

Chapter III addresses the research design selected for this study, the selection of the research participants, data collection procedures and analysis. Qualitative method of data collection in the form of ethnographic interviews was selected given the descriptive nature of the study. The taped interviews were later transcribed and the verbatim analyzed and interpreted. Four male adults described as juvenile recidivists, who were in the juvenile system for offenses committed as juveniles, a school social worker and an administrator participated in the study.

The analysis and interpretation of the data are presented in Chapter IV. Various themes emerged as the data was being analyzed that provided a window into the lives of the juvenile informants allowing the researcher to detect patterns and elements pertaining to the topics under study.

By analyzing the cases individually, commonalities and differences in the experiences of the juvenile informants were allowed to emerge. The verbatim was taken apart and reset in a collage around broad themes that pertained to school and community violence. The themes discovered became the data to be analyzed and interpreted. The analyses of the interviews were the basis for the conclusions, implications and recommendations addressed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature in the following areas: school violence, the victims, the offenders, reasons for violence, the bullies, interventions and preventions, historical and sociological perspectives of juvenile delinquency, the evolution of the juvenile court and Juvenile Drug Court.

School Violence

In 1998, the First Annual Report on School Safety was published providing an overview of school related crime. The report was a collaborative effort between the US Department of Education and the US Department of Justice. According to the Annual Report on School Safety most schools in the United States were safe. The report revealed that contrary to public perception, a child is safer in school than at home or in the community. However, a substantial amount of crime in school against students and teachers does occur and must not be tolerated. The report cited trends in school related crime such as theft against

teachers, the student's perception that they are not safe in school, and an increased presence of gangs in school (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

As shown in *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2002* (Devoe et al., 2002), students continue to be safer in school than away from school. The report also indicates that the number of students who were victims of theft decreased from seven percent to four percent between 1995 and 2001. However, there was no significant change from 1993 to 2001 in the percentage of students in grades nine to twelve who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property. That figure remained relatively constant between seven and nine percent. Although nonfatal victimization decreased, the percentage of students ages 12 through 18, who reported being bullied in 2001 increased from five percent to eight percent. In 2001, 33 percent of students grade 9 through 12 reported that they had been in a physical fight. Students also reported that they were more likely to be afraid of being attacked at school or on the way to and from school than away from school. Twenty nine percent of the students in the urban schools surveyed indicated that there were gangs in their schools. Street gangs not only create fear among students, but also

increase the level of violence in school (DeVoe et al., 2002).

The Victims

"One violent death in schools each year is too many...", a statement made by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, as part of his press release on June 11, 1996. Richard Riley's reaction reflects the seriousness of school violence, as findings regarding school associated violent deaths were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. At the time of the press release, firearms were the weapon of choice. Over three quarter of all the deaths committed in and around schools were perpetrated with a firearm (Riley, 1996).

Patrick Kachur (1996) analyzed the school associated violent deaths generating a closer look at school crime. In general, the data indicated that students in urban schools were twice as likely to be victims of school associated violent deaths than students in suburban areas and that estimate is nine times higher when compared with students in rural areas (Kachur, 1996).

The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice through the Justice Policy Institute, commissioned a report on the issue of tragic deaths in schools. The project covers the period from 1990 to 1998 raising concerns regarding the

news media magnifying coverage of school shootings and the change in public opinion, reflecting panic and fear regarding school safety. Because there had been a lack of in-depth analysis about school violence, the result had been misdirected public policy geared at safeguarding the schools, although the answer to reversing school violence was somewhere else. The data evaluated by The Justice Policy Institute was collected from eight different sources, including the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. The conclusion, as a result of this data analysis revealed that there is no reliable count reflecting the accurate number of children killed in school and that these were tragic events, not part of a national trend (Donahue et al., 1998).

The National School Safety Center defines school associated death as "any homicide, suicide, or weapons-related violent death in the United States...on the property of a private or parochial elementary or secondary school...on the way to or from school... or official school sponsored event... whether on or off school bus or school property"(National School Safety Center, 2003, p1). From the academic year 1992-1993 until November 13, 2003, the National School Safety Center reported three hundred and forty eight school-associated violent deaths. Out of nine

identified reasons, the top four reasons for death were: 1) 109 for unknown reasons, 2) 90 due to personal dispute, 3) 58 suicides, 4) 37 were gang related.

The report identified eight methods of death. The top three methods of death were: 1) 263 shootings, 2) 47 stab/slashing, and 3) 18 beat/kicking. When the victims were identified by gender, the data revealed males to be three times more likely to be victims of school associated death than females. According to the report, high schools continue to be the setting where most of the school associated deaths occurred with two hundred and twenty three deaths, junior high schools followed with 55 deaths, elementary schools reported 37 deadly incidents and 15 deaths were reported at alternative schools. Eight deaths fell under the category of other.

The top five locations in which deaths took place were as follows: 1) 81 deaths took place on campus, 2) 81 deaths occurred near school, 3) 40 deaths occurred in the hallways, 4) 36 deaths occurred in the parking lot, and 5) 29 deaths occurred in the classroom/office. The top five states with the highest school related deaths cited in the report included: 1) California with 75, 2) Texas with 25, 3) Florida with 21, 4) Georgia with 18, and 5) New York with 17 (National School Safety Center, 2003).

For the year 2002, the National Center for Health Statistics listed homicide as one of the leading causes for death in the decline, down 17 percent (National Center for Health Statistics, 2004). The leading causes of death vary by age. Assaults, homicide and suicide described as unintentional causes of death by the Center for Disease Control account for the deaths of those in the 15-19 age group (Anderson, & Smith, 2003). The peak year for homicides of persons under the age of 18 was 1993, with a steady decline. Most murdered children of age 0-11 are killed by a family member, while those in the age range 12-17 are mostly killed by a stranger or acquaintance (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999).

The most recent data from the National Crime Victimization Survey from the Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Characteristics (2003) indicates that between 1992 and 2001 victimization rates in school declined, both at school and away from school. During the same period there was little change in the percent of students in grades nine to twelve who reported being injured with a weapon on school property. The National Crime Victimization Survey's report (Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Characteristics, 2003) indicates no change in trend in the area of violent victimization by age between 1973 and 2002, i.e., the

younger the person, the more likely they were to experience a violent crime. Males were more likely to be victims of violence than females although the rates are getting closer. Students in urban areas seemed to be more vulnerable to violent crime than those who resided in suburban or rural areas. The vulnerability to theft was very similar for all three geographic areas and considered to be the most common school crime (Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Characteristics, 2003).

Victims of school crime also include the teachers. The perception of an unsafe work environment may prompt some teachers to leave the profession. Recent data indicates that between 1996 and 2000, there were over a million nonfatal crimes at school perpetrated against teachers. Some of the crimes against teachers included rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault. Male teachers were victimized twice as many time as female teachers. Urban teachers were more likely to be victims of violent crime and theft than teachers in rural areas (DeVoe et. al., 2002).

Victimization may also lead to the victimization of others. Juvenile victims of violence may be prone to engage in illegal activities, associate with delinquent peers, and

avoid legal recourse in resolving conflicts (Loeber, Kalb & Huizinga, 2001).

The Offenders

Official records often underscore juvenile delinquent behavior. Many of the offenders are not arrested and many arrested sometimes are not processed through juvenile courts. Therefore, those who are not processed are not part of the many data bases that provide information on juvenile crime. In addition, there is the lingering issue of bias in the types of crimes and/or offenders that enter the justice system which may provide an inaccurate profile of juvenile crime (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Delbert Elliott argues that regardless of the existing difficulties in obtaining data, official statistics along with self reporting surveys should still be conducted as means of understanding etiology and delinquent behavior (Elliot, 1994).

A look at the estimates for population increases indicates that between 1995-2007 the 15 and 17 age group will increase by 19 percent. This is also the age group responsible for two thirds of all juvenile arrests. Population increase between 1995-2007 for 15-17 year olds along ethnic lines are expected to be as follows: 20 percent for American Indians, 65 percent for Asian/Pacific Islander, 21 percent for Blacks, 60 percent for Hispanics,

9 percent for white, non-Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998).

According to data provided by the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, 21 percent of 16 year olds arrested had first been arrested at age twelve, an age when children are enrolled in school. More serious is the estimate of certain crimes being committed for the first time by age 12 by those 16 year olds, such as, 79 percent had purposely destroyed property, 63 percent committed assault, 60 percent carried a gun, and 52 percent belonged to a gang (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998).

Snyder(2003), provided an analysis of data collected by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention which indicated that, in general juvenile arrest rates had reached its peak in 1996 and then declined by 2001 for ages 10-17. However it is significant to note that the arrest rates for drug abuse violations, aggravated assaults and simple assaults did not evidence the same type of decline.

Juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations increased 121 percent for the period 1992 to 2001. Among the four violent crime index offenses, i.e., rape, homicide, aggravated and simple assault and robbery, only assaults did not show a significant decline juvenile arrest rate in

2001. In 2001 the rate for juvenile aggravated assaults was still 37 percent above the 1980 level. More troublesome are the juvenile arrests rates for simple assaults which have remained substantially high with a near 150 percent increase since 1980. The rate for simple assault declined slightly between 1997 and 2001 but remained near its historical high in 2001 (Snyder, 2003).

In a sample interview conducted with juveniles arrested in the first six months of 1995 by the National Institute of Justice, of those arrested, one in five juveniles carried a gun all or most of the time, and 23 percent of those indicated that they had used it in a crime. Two thirds stated that the reason for carrying a gun was for protection and respect (Decker, 1997).

In an effort to tackle the issue of guns in the hands of minors, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in 1996 began to run traces on firearms used in crimes. Between 1997 and 1998 over 76,000 guns were traced from 27 cities. In 11 percent of the cases, the guns had been recovered from crimes committed by persons under the age of 18 and 32 percent from crimes committed by persons age 18 to 24. The weapon of choice from this sample is estimated to be the semiautomatic pistol preferred by 58 percent of those under 18 years old and by 60percent of those between

the ages of 18 and 24 (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, 1998).

Equally as disturbing on this front, however, is the failure of such reporting to account for the weapons formerly used by New Jersey and likely by those in other states which are sold when the police departments upgrade their weapons. The high quality of weapons used by law enforcement which are sold by many New Jersey municipalities when they "trade-up" are often prized by collectors and criminals alike for their price and ammunition capacities. These weapons are grand-fathered out of the federal law, banning magazines on automatic weapons which exceed a ten round capacity. Authorities are increasingly noting the emergence of these weapons in urban areas and have identified 55 instances in 1998 and 1999 alone, whereby former police, pre-ban weapons were discovered in illegal or suspicious circumstances (Goldstein, 2000).

Reasons for Violence

According to the definition offered by the American Psychological Association (1998), violence is the act of purposefully hurting someone. Violence can be used as the reaction of choice for some people when trying to release feelings of anger or frustration, to manipulate someone

and/or retaliate for pain or hurt caused by others.

Violence is a learned behavior that can be changed. Some of the contributing factors to violent behavior include: peer pressure, sense of low self-esteem, exposure to early childhood abuse or neglect, a need to seek respect or attention from others, witnessing violence at home and easy access to weapons.

William H. Roth (1998) addresses the issue of student's perception of school violence indicating that violence can also be described as a means of resolving conflicts. Usually it is learned behavior that occurs in the home, the place where children first learn to develop skills to solve conflicts or problems. Violence is a community problem that is brought to school by children who may have been exposed to it by their parents and/or by the areas in which they reside (Roth, 1998).

Lack of parental supervision may be a contributing factor as to why some children are more prone to exhibit violent behavior. Lack of parental supervision includes younger children being left alone due to a rise in single parent homes, inappropriate supervision by dysfunctional adults, financial stressors that may cause adults to work multiple jobs or longer hours, the high cost of child care and cost of extra curricula activities (O'Donnell, 1999).

In 1998, The National Institute of Drug Abuse conducted the Monitoring the Future Study (MTF), a self reporting survey administered to 50,000 secondary school students in public and private schools. Fifty four percent of all seniors surveyed indicated that they had at least tried illicit drugs. Alcohol seems to be more popular with high school seniors than illicit drugs. Four out of five seniors reported that they had tried alcohol at least once. Binge drinking described as five or more drinks in a row was practiced by 31 percent of seniors and 14 percent of eighth graders. Tobacco was tried by 65 percent of the seniors and 45 percent of eighth graders. Close to 25 percent of the seniors who reported using illicit drugs had been arrested and taken to the police station, and close to 50percent of the seniors who reported using illicit drugs reported breaking the law (Johnston, 1999).

The Bullies

Bullying is described as a group phenomenon, making the family the first group to encounter the bully. The misdirected child's anger toward the parent for fear of losing the parent's affection is often channeled through sibling rivalry and sets the stage for the development of the bully. Parents contribute to the escalation of the sibling rivalry, by being unaware of their behavior when

dealing with their children in such instances as taking sides. Being able to redirect the child's anger toward the parent shows the child that anger can be expressed and understood. A similar situation occurs in the classroom; the teacher needs to redirect the student's anger at the leader and convey the message to the students that anger can be expressed. Lack of leadership creates the environment for bullies by allowing the bully to continue directing the anger at other students (Chuah Feinson, 2002).

When left unattended bullying can lead to prolonged violent behavior that invariably affects the school environment. The school setting is a common place for bullying to occur, setting fear for many students (Arnette & Walsleben, 1998). Bullying is often thought of as part of inoffensive child's play and part of growing up. However, bullying has been linked to other problems such as, difficulties in school, alcohol use and emotional problems. The long term adverse effects include a four-fold increase in criminal behavior for the bully and higher levels of depression and lower self-esteem for the victims (Brown, 2002).

Bullying is not only a concern for school officials but also to the Juvenile Justice System when the behavior

escalates to include criminal offenses. The bully may be involved in acts of extortion, theft, assault, battery, weapons possession, hazing, sexual harassment and even sexual assault, arson and murder. Not acting on the actions of the bully promotes a norm that condones bullying (Quiroz, 2002).

In May 1998 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began research to study school shootings, but it was not until after the shooting at Columbine High in April 1999, that the research took urgency. The symposium that took place in Virginia as a result included law enforcement and experts from the fields of adolescence, mental health and education. After evaluating 18 school shootings the group offered recommendations and warning signs in the areas of behavior, family life, school, and community environment. The school recommendations noted that little is done to prevent or punish disrespectful behavior between the students or groups of students. Citing bullying as being part of the school culture and administrators seldom addressing it, promoting divisions or allowing them to remain the same. The recommendations note an inflexible school culture where official and unofficial patterns of behaviors among students, staff and administrators exist, insensitive to the needs of newer students and staff. A

disturbing observation is that students do not trust the staff to reveal concerns about another student's behavior (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999a).

Intervention and Prevention

The argument for the need to implement interventions and prevention programs is clearly made by Mark Cohen (1998) who conducted a cost analysis on what it may cost society for one youth who drops out of school and becomes involved with crime or drugs. The present cost for one career criminal to society is estimated to be between 1.3 to 1.5 million dollars. The estimate was made based on crimes committed by the average career criminal, who may commit 68 to 80 crimes over a 10 year period, including four crimes committed as a juvenile (Cohen, 1998).

Prevention programs that run after school can be used as a deterrent to juvenile crime. The National Incident-Based Reporting System using data from 1991 to 1996 from FBI master files reveals that serious violent crimes and aggravated assault crimes committed by juveniles peak between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. On non-school days, juvenile crime peaks between 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1998).

Violence in schools, as research suggests, stems from sources outside of the school, however, violence may be

precipitated by the school setting. Violence to resolve interpersonal conflicts disproportionately involves young people, both as victims and perpetrators. Incidents of violence in schools, affects not only students but staff as well. Feeling unsafe and in fear prevents some students from attending school or actively participating in the educational process. Youth violence has moved from the judicial and/or sociological domain to become a major public health concern. Thus following a public health approach, intervention and prevention are viewed as part of the answer in controlling or reducing violent deaths. The public health model suggested by Hamburg(1998), includes problem identification and development of solutions with the support of the community, data gathering to determine risk behaviors, identification of risk factors, education and outreach. Violence is not an inevitable fact of life it is a problem that can be prevented (Hamburg, 1998).

New York City has been training its elementary age students in conflict resolution since 1985 with positive results. Dr. J. Lawrence Aber of Columbia University conducted a study comparing the number of lessons students in the program received in a year. The results indicated that the children who received more of the programs lessons were more likely to settle disputes peacefully

(O'Neil, 2003).

Designing interventions not only applies to the students, but involves also the staff. Toby Chuah Feinson (2001), contends that teachers also experience an array of emotions that also spill into the classroom creating a mixture of feelings that go unaddressed. When teaching conditions and workload become unmanageable for teachers, the situation raises the level of anxiety and can create feelings of neglect and abandonment that are transferred to the relationship with the student. The combination of behavior problems, overcrowded classrooms and the teacher's poor working conditions set an environment of hostility and aggression for all involved. The aggression toward students may be in the form of difficult exams, an inability to set behavioral limits in the classroom, increased absences by the teacher and humiliation of students. Providing teachers with the tools to help manage their feelings helps not only the teacher, but benefits the students (Chuah Feinson, 2001).

In an attempt to reduce the number of violent incidents that have been occurring in the school setting, educators across the nation have embraced the concept of teaching character education. In 1999 legislation was proposed to increase the amount of funding by \$125 million

over five years dedicated to character education. Character education revolves around pillars of character:

a) trustworthiness, b) respect, c) responsibility, d) fairness, e) caring and f) citizenship. The concepts are integrated into the regular curriculum by classroom teachers. The program has been well received by teachers and administrators alike (Ferguson, 1999).

Historical and Sociological Perspective

Colonial America endured chronic labor shortages, making the young person a valued source of labor. By puberty, children worked as apprentices and were part of the workforce. Educationally, the agrarian society did not provide for age-graded educational instruction, nor did it embrace the concept of compulsory education. However, with the development of the printing press, literacy soon became an important asset (Feld, 1999).

The industrial revolution drastically changed the economic basis from the farm to city factories. The need for apprenticeships began to diminish, as the demand for unskilled workers increased. This shift in the demand for an unskilled workforce greatly impacted on the established system of apprenticeship, seen not only as a tool to train the young, but as an instrument to control younger people (Cochran, 1972).

By the late 1800's, the system of apprenticeship was replaced with a more formal type of education and the basics for a system of separation by age, in schools was established. This educational development thus, impacted on the economics of the family and also laid the foundation for the development of concepts such as childhood and adolescence (Katz, 1968, 1971).

Changing views on children ran parallel with the changes occurring in the social fabric of the United States of that time. The transition from a rural agrarian to an urban industrial society, increased immigration, and urban growth became a catalyst for social change (Demos, 1970).

The 1800's and early 1900's experienced a gradual process toward change in the family structure. Men were seen as workers and women as caretakers. The economic role of children changed increasing their dependency on their parents, imposing parental responsibilities and segregating women to domestic work (Rothman, 1978).

As family life became more nuclear and private, women became a strong force in promoting the concept of childhood (Kett, 1977). Women also supported many of the reforms which lead to the development of the juvenile court, child welfare, child labor laws, and other reforms which affected children (Feld, 1999).

Not all social classes, ethnic or religious groups agreed with this new concept of childhood. Due mostly to the rapid immigrant influx, society in the late 1800's and

early 1900's experienced a "conflict between Protestant middle-class life-style..." "...and the emerging urban lower-class life-style"(Kett 1977, p90).

Due to the arrival of new immigrants, the population more than doubled, between the late 1800's and 1915 (Grubb & Lazerson, 1982). The linguistic, religious, and cultural differences of these new immigrants made assimilation difficult, threatening the values of Anglo-Protestant America (Hofstadler, 1955).

Parens Patriae

Child welfare became the symbol behind the legal concept of *parens patriae*, that is, the state as parent when parents were found incompetent to care for their children. However, public intervention under *parens patriae* became difficult to implement. This was largely due to emerging social change in favor of family privacy and the notion of child rearing as strictly a private responsibility (Grubb & Lazerson, 1982).

During the early 1800's, Houses of Refuge were created in urban areas with the intent to supervise and provide social control over the poor and immigrant youth, whose behavior did not conform to the established rules of the era (Sutton, 1988). The first House of Refuge opened in New York City on January 1, 1825. Boston followed in 1826,

Philadelphia in 1828 and by 1860 there were 16 Houses of Refuge in the United States. A youngster considered to be vagrant or charged with a minor offense would be considered appropriate for the House of Refuge. A common way of maintaining order and discipline was by the use of tactics such as solitary confinement and beatings (Ventrell, 1998).

In the mid 1800's another type of institution, the reform school, was created in an attempt to control and shelter deviant children. Reform schools were situated in rural areas with the intent to protect children from the negative influences associated with urban life (Hawes & Hiner, 1985).

Progressive Movement

The industrial revolution coupled with the strong structural changes taking place in the mid to late 1800's triggered the Progressive movement. Ideologies associated with the Progressive movement urged for reformed business practices, laws to regulate the railroad, social welfare, criminal justice, children's issues and political reforms (Wiebe, 1967).

The motivation behind Progressive reformers is diverse in nature. The industrial revolution changed the traditional agrarian life and posed a threat to Anglo-Protestant values. Reestablishing and preserving these

values, such as self-discipline, orderliness, respectability, as well as cultural dominance, being threatened by the influx of new immigrants offered the forum for Progressive reforms (Hofstadler, 1955).

David Rothman (1980), indicates that Progressives unequivocally believed in the state to do the right thing. The basis for Progressive reforms was the strong belief in their own social and moral values. Thus, schools, juvenile courts and other government agencies were seen as the entities that would help the new immigrants assimilate and acculturate. Progressives saw this as the process that would quickly make those less fortunate become active participants in the race for what was perceived to be ideal middle class status.

Progressive philosophy on child reform became two fold. On the one hand, families had the responsibility to raise their children, but on the other it expanded the state's function to oversee families on how they raised their children. Laws were enacted and institutions created for the protection of children, to help control them and to supervise their parents (Rothman, 1980).

The thrust of the Progressive movement is well summarized by Barry Feld (1999):

These three reforms - school, work, and delinquency - constitute the trinity of the legal and social construction of childhood. They reflect the central Progressive assumptions that strengthening the nuclear family, shielding the child from adult roles, postponing economic integration, formally educating him or her for upward mobility, and allowing the state to intervene in the event of parental or youthful deviance constituted the ideal way to prepare children for life. (Feld, 1999, p. 37)

The Evolution of the Juvenile Court

The first and separate Juvenile Court was created in Cook County, Illinois in 1899. It provided for penal institutions separate from adults, it allowed for legal control over non-criminal youth, and it denied children the criminal safeguards afforded adults in the criminal system. Defense attorneys and juries were not needed (Sutton, 1988). On the one hand, the juvenile court acknowledged the vulnerability associated with the concept of childhood and supported the view that parents have the responsibility to raise their children. On the other hand, it expanded the state's authority to act in the best interest of the child. The premise of the juvenile system was to be rehabilitative in nature (Feld, 1999).

According to La Fave & Scott (as cited in Shepherd, 2000), prior to the establishment of the juvenile court and until 1967, what guided decisions concerning the offending youth was the rule of common law on criminal capacity. For purposes of establishing criminal responsibility, a child under the age of seven was found to be not responsible for their acts. Age 14, was determined to be the age when youngsters could be held accountable for their deeds as adults. It was up to the government, then, to establish reasonable doubt for an offense committed by a child between age seven and age 14 (Shepherd, 2000).

Prior to 1967, juvenile court was opened to many abuses. One such example is the case of Gerry Gault who was sentenced to seven years in a juvenile prison for making a prank telephone call. The decision was reversed on appeal by the U.S. Supreme Court (Humes, 1999).

Ventrell (1998) cited that the U.S. Supreme Court in re Gault, created rights for juveniles such as notice for charges, confrontations and cross-examinations, the right to not self-incriminate and the right to counsel. The landmark Gault decision polarized the views on juvenile justice. It advanced children's rights, but also criminalized juvenile court ending the court's authority to treat children like children. Ventrell (1998) contends that

although the Gault decision granted rights to juveniles it did not dismantled the parens patriae authority allowing the states to continue its ability to act in the best interest of the child. Juvenile court was thus separated to accommodate the Gault decision in the delinquency context and to continue providing protective services for children and families (Ventrell, 1998). Although the intent behind the Gault decision was to protect children's rights it did not protect the child. Juvenile court today focuses on legal issues and not on how to help the child. Services to the child may be provided after all the legal issues have been addressed, and at times this may come too late, for both the victim and the juvenile. Currently more states have passed laws that allow the juvenile to be tried and sentenced as adults, setting back the progress of the juvenile court to the nineteenth century (Humes, 1999).

Juvenile Drug Court

The concept of a Drug Court first emerged in Dade County, Florida in 1989 under the leadership of Janet Reno who was then the state's attorney for Dade County. This innovation allowed the substance abuse treatment programs and the criminal justice systems to work together. The goal for the Drug Court was to reduce cost due to incarceration, drug abuse and the rate of recidivism. A review of the data

one year after graduation from the Miami Drug Court showed a reduced re-arrest rate of three percent for those who participated in Drug Court compared to 30 percent for those who did not participate in the Drug Court program. The cost for maintaining an offender in treatment is also significantly less than the cost of maintaining that same person in jail for one year. The concept of Drug Court was later expanded to cover juveniles (Drug Court Program Office, 1999).

In 1995, the U.S. Department of Justice established the Drug Courts Program Office (DCPO). The DCPO is responsible for administering the funds for drug courts. During the fiscal year 1999, the DCPO funded \$40 million in assistance to the nation's Drug Court Programs (Drug Court Program Office, 1999).

As per provisions defined in the 1994 Crime Act violent offenders are not permitted to participate in the drug court program. A violent offender is defined as someone charged or convicted while having in their possession a weapon or used force against another, or caused serious bodily injury or death to another (Drug Court Program Office, 1998).

New Jersey Juvenile Drug Court

In the community where the study was conducted, the

Juvenile Drug Court Program links juvenile justice with community treatment. The goals of the program include reducing delinquent behavior of the alcohol and/or drug dependent juvenile, optimizing the rehabilitative components of the Juvenile Justice System as well as the treatment system. It is mandatory and pivotal to the success of the treatment plan and the juvenile drug court interventions that the parent or guardian fully participate in this process. For those parents or guardians who may have a substance abuse problem a referral for treatment can be ordered.

The Juvenile Drug Court Program is administered by the Superior Court of New Jersey - Family Division. The Presiding Judge in the Family Division and the Family Division Manager are the ones responsible for the management of the Drug Court Program. There is one Drug Court Judge and a Drug Court Coordinator. The Drug Court Coordinator reports directly to the Family Division Manager (Drug Court Program Office, 2000).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will describe the methodology selected for this study of the relation between school and community violence. The method selected for this study is qualitative, using ethnographic interviews.

There are several differences between qualitative and quantitative research. One difference being the type of data being collected; in qualitative research, the data may be in the form of words, sentences and/or paragraphs, not numbers as in the case of quantitative research. Therefore, in qualitative research, different research strategies are used, including various means of collecting data (Newman, 1997).

Qualitative researchers attempt to study the subjective world of their informants with objectivity. The methods such as keeping detailed field notes and the collection and reviewing of large amounts of data limit observer's biases. The data collected provide accounts of events that help override any biases or attitudes the

researcher might have had prior to the beginning of the study.

Interaction with the informants occurs in a natural and unobtrusive manner. The goal here is not to treat the informant as a "research subject". The atmosphere of trust created allows informants the opportunity to reveal how they think about their lives, their experiences and other specific life situations.

Not all qualitative researchers share the same goal. Some attempt to develop grounded theory, others focus on sensitizing concepts, or emphasize description. Nonetheless, qualitative researchers do share certain areas. They do not outline causes and predictions of human behavior. The primary goal of the qualitative researcher is to develop an understanding of an informant's behavior and experiences, not to make predictions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Given the scope of the topic under study and the descriptive and interpretative nature of the research there are no hypotheses to prove. To study the subjective world of the juvenile informants with objectivity as they moved between school and street life, qualitative research in the form of ethnographic interviews was selected as the methodology for this study. Through ethnographic interviews

the informants were allowed to reveal how they think about their lives and life experiences.

Ethnographic Research

Academic field research began in the late nineteenth century with anthropology. The British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski was the first field researcher to interact with native people, recording their customs, beliefs and social processes (Newman, 1997).

Ethnography, thus, originated from cultural anthropology. Ethnography means the description of a culture and understanding someone else's way of life from their point of view. Rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people. The discovery of the informant's view is a different type of knowledge from that which rests mainly on the researcher's view (Spradley, 1979).

George and Louise Spindler (1987) indicate that ethnographic study requires direct observation, interviewing in both a casual and formal manner, and it requires being immersed in the field situation. The interaction between observation and interview is pivotal. The researcher observes and asks questions, and with additional knowledge from the answers, observes some more with new knowledge and asks more questions and so on.

Observations need to be repetitive over time, so as to determine which behaviors are patterned and which are one time events (Spindler & Spindler, 1987).

Spradley (1979) defines culture as "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior" (Spradley, 1979, p. 5). This definition of culture reflects the goal in ethnography which is to grasp the native's point of view (Spradley, 1979).

According to Harry F. Wolcott (1987), "The purpose of ethnographic research is to describe and interpret cultural behavior" (Wolcott 1987, p. 43). Cultural interpretation is seen as the essence in ethnographic research. Ethnographic research shares many techniques of qualitative research, but without cultural interpretation it is not ethnography (Wolcott, 1987)

Human behavior has different meaning to the performer. These meanings can be discovered. Ethnography generates empirical information about the lives of people in particular situations and the meaning their behavior has to them. It permits us to look at alternative realities and modify our culturally based theories of human behavior (Spradley, 1979).

In ethnography, language is not just a means of communication, but a tool for constructing reality. In our English speaking world, it may appear that the informant is using the same language as the researcher. That, however, is not the case; the semantic differences that exist have a profound influence on ethnographic research. This concept is described best by Spradley (1979) in his fieldwork with skid row men. He discovered that in referring to "a flop" these men were discussing the concept of a home. They had a way of locating flops, for protecting themselves from the weather and from the intrusion of others. Most people would see them as homeless, but in his research he did not hear the skid row men use the term "homeless" to describe their situation. However, he did hear them say "I made a good flop last night" (Spradley, 1979, p. 19). Subtle, but important language differences must be recognized by the ethnographer (Spradley, 1979).

As a result of interviews and observations, the researcher is able to collect important data which elicits the informant's view of reality and its meaning as it refers to events, intention and consequences. The informant's view of reality must be interpreted and translated into the vernacular of the readers in order to

give the findings wider applicability (Spindler & Spindler, 1987).

In contrast to journalistic interviewing, ethnographic interviewing, according to Spradley (1979), involves the process of interviewing informants using interpersonal skills such as, listening instead of talking, taking a passive rather than an assertive role, and expressing verbal interest in the other person. There is no judgment or right or wrong. Informants are engaged by the ethnographer to speak in their own language. The informant provides a model from which the ethnographer can learn. The object is for the informant to become a teacher for the ethnographer providing a view of the informant's culture (Spradley, 1979).

Specific Methodology Used in this Study

The ethnographic interview protocol used in this study and outlined in Spradley (1979) was adopted for this study. As the ethnographer in this study, this writer selected informants following Spradley's (1979) requirements: (1) thorough enculturation, (2) current involvement, (3) an unfamiliar cultural scene, (4) adequate time, and (5) nonanalytic (Spradley, 1979).

A good informant is one knowledgeable about their culture with at least one year of full-time involvement in

the culture being studied. The informant not only tells about his own actions, but discusses patterns of behavior associated with the culture (Spradley, 1979). For this study, each of the selected informants volunteered adequate blocks of time to be interviewed following the ethnographic protocol.

The interviewees for this study were six willing adult participants. Four interviews of one hour duration were conducted with each of the six adults participating in this study. Four of the participants were male juvenile recidivists currently involved in the Juvenile Justice System. Although they were adults they continued in the Juvenile Justice System due to offenses committed as juveniles. The juvenile informants also had contact with the school district Zero Tolerance program and the Juvenile Drug Court Program. In addition, participating in this study, were two district staff with vast experience dealing with students who demonstrate violent behavior in the school setting. Although the juvenile informants were the main contributors to the study, the interviews with the school district staff members served to reconfirm the topics that emerged in the interviews with the juvenile informants.

This study, however, considered the juvenile offenders

to be thoroughly enculturated and therefore regarded as experts. The juvenile recidivists participating in this study were the main contributors to this research. For the purpose of this study they are considered informants. The juvenile informants' experiences stem from their participation in violence related acts and illegal activity, whether alone or in the company of their peers, involvement with the Juvenile Justice System, and troubling school experience.

The knowledge possessed by these informants regarding delinquent and violent behavior in the school, the community and the Juvenile Detention Center had been minimally tapped. Their knowledge and experience became the driving tool behind this study. All of the informants met Spradley's minimal requirements for a good informant.

This researcher kept a detailed account of the interviews with the informants. According to Spradley (1979), an ethnographic record consists of field notes, tape recordings, pictures, artifacts, and anything else which documents the cultural scene under study (Spradley, 1979). This researcher as the ethnographer in this study tape-recorded the interviews with informants which were then fully transcribed and analyzed. Tape-recorded interviews, when fully transcribed, represent one

of the most complete expanded accounts. Despite the tedious and time consuming nature of the work, making a full transcription becomes invaluable for conducting ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979, p.75).

The verbatim became the raw data that was analyzed and interpreted following the protocol for ethnographic research as described by Spradley (1979). The interviews were conducted in an office in the county administration building, and in an office in the educational setting. The interviews were conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data.

This ethnographer analyzed the data collected after each interview searching for cultural symbols and relationships. A symbol is the folk term used by informants or an event that refers to something. A term can have many different meaning depending on its use.

This ethnographer identified these symbols placing them in larger units called domains. A domain is made up of two or more included terms. Domain analysis is an ongoing process which takes place as new information is collected from each interview. The purpose is to discover the system of cultural meaning. Spradley (1979) indicates that in any culture, semantic relationships are as few as under a dozen

and that certain semantic relationships appear to be universal, making semantic relationships a very useful tool in conducting ethnographic analysis.

According to Spradley (1979), after domains have been identified they must be tested with the informants. Asking structural questions will confirm or deny the identified domains.

Following Spradley's protocol, structural questions were developed to explore the organization of the informants' cultural knowledge. Structural questions lead the ethnographer to discover and verify the presence of folk domains, cover terms for these domains, and the included terms.

By using structural questions, the ethnographer does not need to impose analytic categories to organize the data from interviews or participant observation.

Ethnography is more than finding out what people know; it also involves discovering how people have organized that knowledge. (Spradley, 1979, p.131)

Taxonomies are used to show the relationship among all symbols in a domain. It analyzes the internal structure of the domain allowing the researcher to approximate how the informants organize their culture.

By asking contrast questions, the ethnographer was able to further discover the meaning of a symbol by finding out how it was different from another. Contrast can also be achieved by examining the interview data and searching for statements that have been made regarding a set of symbols.

Searching for the attributes that relate differences among the symbols is called componential analysis. According to Spradley (1979), the process for creating a componential analysis includes searching for contrasts, sorting them out and grouping them together. It also includes confirming this information with the informants and adding any new information so as to map the informants' world as accurately as possible.

After the selected domains were analyzed, the next step was to establish a relationship among these domains. The relationship among domains and how these are linked to the culture are called themes. The selection of cultural themes provided a holistic view of the juveniles' cultural scene as per Spradley(1979).

Opler (1945) was the first to introduce the concept of cultural themes into the field of anthropology in his work describing the general features of the Apache culture. His idea was that a culture could be better understood by identifying recurrent themes (Opler, 1945).

After scrutinizing the data, this researcher selected a list of possible themes that could be found in the informants' culture. The six cultural themes selected were:

1. Community Violence

Dealing with Anger

Starting Trouble

Respect

The Shootings

The Injuries

Views on Death

Bonds with Friends

Life in the Streets

2. Sale and Use of Drugs

Drugs: First Time

Drugs: Hustling

The Profits

The Risks

Juvenile Drug Court

3. Experiences with the Juvenile Justice System

The County Juvenile Detention Center

Same as the Streets

Views towards Justice

4. School and School Related violence

Academic Background

Tigers High

A Day at Tigers High

Problems the Staff Faces as Tigers High

Behavior Problems at Tigers High

Settling the Score

Success Stories

Re-Building Tigers Pride

The Future of Tigers High

Zero Tolerance Program

Juveniles' View of School

School Behavior

Weapons in School

Display of Anger in School a Social Workers View

The Triggers

Retooling

Parental Cooperation

What Makes Zero Tolerance Work

Early Intervention

5. Informants' Family Context

Taxonomy of Juvenile Informants

Relationship with the Father

Relationship with Mom

Single Parent Home

Staying Out of Trouble

Boredom

Socio-economic issues

Lack of Jobs

Curfew and Discipline

Family Arguments

6. Views of the Future

The Goals

Concerns about the Juvenile Justice System

Views on Change-An Unfamiliar Concept

Regrets

The final step for this ethnographer was to translate the process of discovering the meaning of the culture under study. Communicating the ethnography through writing to others who are not familiar with that specific cultural scene requires a focus on the specific, rather than the general. Focusing on the specific offers the reader a wonderful opportunity to see how those being studied live (Spradley, 1979). The carefully selected cultural themes are explained in the analysis of the data under Findings and Data Analysis found in Chapter IV.

Given the confidential nature of the data collected, strict confidentiality guidelines were followed granting the participants complete anonymity. None of the participants were identified by their names. The responses

of all the participants were combined in the presentation of the data in support of the conclusions reached in the study. All participants reserved the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Keeping to the agreed terms at the time of the informed consent (see Appendix D) and following ethical guidelines, upon completion of the research, all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants were completely destroyed.

Time Frame of the Interviews

This study was conducted between January 2002 and January 2003. The six interviewees for this study were willing adult participants. Four interviews of one hour duration were conducted with each of the six adults participating in this study following the protocol for ethnographic interviews.

The interviews with the informants were tape-recorded and then fully transcribed. The verbatim became the raw data that was analyzed and interpreted following the protocol for ethnographic research as described by Spradley(1979). The interviews were conducted in an office in the county administration building, and in an office in the educational setting.

Four of the participants were male juvenile recidivists involved in the Juvenile Justice System due to

offenses committed as juveniles. The juvenile informants also had contact with the school district Zero Tolerance Program and the Juvenile Drug Court Program. Two of the participants were school district staff members, who have vast experience in dealing with the issue of school violence and student's violent behavior. Interviews with the school district staff members served to reconfirm the topics that emerged in the interviews with the juvenile informants.

This study considers the juvenile recidivists to be thoroughly enculturated and therefore experts and the main contributors to this research. For the purpose of this study they are considered juvenile informants. Their experiences stem from their participation in illegal activity, whether alone or in the company of their peers, involvement with the Juvenile Justice System, and troubling school experience.

The knowledge possessed by these informants regarding the issue of violence in the schools, the community, the juvenile detention center, and delinquent behavior has been minimally tapped. Their knowledge and experience was the driving tool behind this study.

CHAPTER IV

Findings and Data Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relation between school and community violence. Specifically, this study attempted to identify factors that affect community violence as an agent of school violence and its impact on the climate of the school, by thoroughly examining the attitude of at-risk students who have come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System. For this purpose a format was developed that allowed for the analysis of the data in the form of the transcribed interviews conducted with the juvenile informants and school district staff members who have vast experience in the area of community and school violence. The analysis of the data consisted in selecting common pieces of information in order to formulate a cohesive presentation given the vast amount of data that had been gathered.

Chapter IV examines the findings of the study based on the collected data. The interviews for this study were conducted from January 2002 through January 2003. The study

offers an account of the culture of school and community violence as conceptualized by the informants participating in the study. The ethnographic interviews reveal the informants, culture in a way which exceeds what any outsider of their culture may provide. As with any other culture, the culture of school and community violence is established in an order that is part of a larger pattern.

This study identifies recurrent themes derived from informant interviews that provide an understanding of the larger pattern of school and community violence. The themes identified include:

- 1) Community violence
- 2) Sale and use of drugs
- 3) Experiences with the Juvenile Justice System
- 4) School and school violence
- 5) Family life
- 6) Views of the future

An interpretation of the findings follows each of the themes selected. This chapter presents an overview of the descriptions of the informants' perceptions on the topics of juvenile delinquency, school and community violence. Initials were chosen at random and applied to each of the juvenile informants to maintain confidentiality. A final

interpretation of the results of this study is offered at the end of the chapter.

Community Violence

Violence can be used as the reaction of choice for some people when trying to release feelings of anger or frustration, to manipulate someone and/or retaliate for pain or hurt caused by others. Violence is a learned behavior that can be changed. Some of the contributing factors to violent behavior include: peer pressure, sense of low self-esteem, exposure to early childhood abuse or neglect, a need to seek respect or attention from others, witnessing violence at home and easy access to weapons (American Psychological Association, 1998). Youngsters without proper role models, often tend to develop their own patterns or norms for behavior based primarily on their desires (Cantelon, 1994).

Dealing with anger.

The juvenile informants were able to acknowledge their anger, but were not always able to identify the source of the anger. When asked if he knew why he was angry as a child, informant V replied:

"No, and I still don't know now."

Another informant provided his thought about what he did to express his anger, informant A explains:

"I use to just burst out, fight, argue, fight..."

Fighting became the outlet they chose to channel their anger when they were younger; as eighteen year olds, they admitted that fighting is not always the first method for directing their anger. The number of fights decreased as they got older. The juveniles changed from selecting fighting as a first response for simple confrontations to holding in their anger.

Informant A: "...I use to stress out, I want to fight and stuff like dat. Now I don't fight like dat, I just keep it in."

Informant W: " I still do have a whole lot of anger inside, but I channel it differently now....I don't, I, I keep my problems to me..."

Their reasons for not talking it over with others deals with issues of trust and fear of being laughed at.

Informant W: " I keep it inside, 'cause I don't want people to make fun of me...I don't even talk to my own parents."

Since the anger was not always processed appropriately, it often took the form of concealed anger sprouting into grudges waiting for a confrontation to escape. Informant W explains:

"...I'm tryin' ta leave it alone, but that revenge still stays in my head... when I see 'em, I think I'm like humm, I can git 'em..."

The informants described having little patience with others once they determined they no longer wanted to engage in social play. The informants gave a warning and if the warning was not acknowledged by their adversary, the outcome was usually a physical response. Informant M explains:

"...like when I'm in a bad mood and somebody be playing around and I don't like them playing around I used to hurt 'em. I told you two times to stop playing. I tell you two times and that's it..when you come back..pop, cause when I'm in a bad mood I don't like to play..."

Starting trouble.

Starting trouble was not a random event just for the sake of it. The event was a choice for the release of anger or stressor. Informant A:

"...because I was angry...if somebody got a radio or some'in, I take the radio, not because I liked it, just because I wanted to start trouble."

Starting trouble for these informants was also a means for establishing or maintaining status within their peer group. Informant W:

"I'll walk up and I'll bump 'em, and say "what's your problem? This and that, starting trouble. You know, if people look at you wrong, I'm like, whatchu looking at? You know what I'm saying, 'cause I used to hang with the crowd..."

Fighting became a common event in the lives of the juveniles. Status became something that had to be defended on a constant basis. Informant A provided his perception:

"If you talk to someone the only thing that's gonna happen is that they gonna do it again, they gonna argue again, you gonna argue again, all over again, but if you fight, then you gonna get it off your chest, you might fight again like two more times, but then it's gonna be over with..."

Parents, even those perceived as cooperative and family oriented, teach their son to fight in order to prevent further attacks and thus maintain or establish their status. Elijah Anderson's (1999) research with South Philadelphia youth found that even "decent parents" teach their children the "code of the streets". Parents are aware of what their children face in the streets and what they need to do in order to survive in the streets. Informant M explains his reason for a fight that resulted in an eye injury for his adversary and an adult charge for him:

"...I was wrong but he tried to attack me, so I gotta defend myself, either way that's what my mother told me since I was small...I just defend myself, attacking me I gotta hit you back, simple as that."

Informant A indicates how he was taught to fight with others who were bigger than he was. Informant A:

"...my aunt and them always told me that somebody bigger than you and you get in a fight, you know they gonna beat you, pick somein up and hit 'em with it, cause then its not a fair fight if they bigger than you."

The reasons the informants provided for fighting were diverse, it included:

- 1) Fighting for the release of anger

- 2) Out of excitement
- 3) If they felt disrespected
- 4) Drug related to protect their stash
- 5) In defense of friends
- 6) To prevent further attacks on their person

Resolving the problem was not always something that could be accomplished with one violent event. Many times, "the beef" lingered on for days. Informant A provided an anecdote on an incident that occurred while he was with a group of his friends gambling. To resolve the conflict took about seven days. The incident provided insight, not only into how the informant handled the conflict in an effort to maintain his status, but also how the adversary was able to protect himself and thus defend his status. Informant A:

"...we were in there playing cards, I'm not playing, but my peoples playing, they gambling, they drunk..my man trying to cheat or som'in, like not paying 'cause he lost, now they in the poolroom arguing and I got the pool stick. I'm bout to hit 'em with the pool stick 'cause they drunk and they jist arguing...get outside and they still arguing, my man pay 'em but he still talking like he, he say I beat yall up this and dat, shoot one of yall motherfuckers, shit like that, so I grab a brick, I'm 'bout to hit 'em with a brick, my man say, chill, chill, yall, jist chill, I dropped the brick..."

The argument continues two days later. The informant relates:

"...I went to the store with my uncle, I see 'em, he was jist walking behind me like he about to hit me, so I'm

jist looking at him, but he ain't do noting. He wit his girl..."

A third confrontation occurred at a local mall, although the informant was not present, his friends continued with the unresolved conflict. The informant explained:

"Then my peoples said he was walking in the mall..my man was in there, my man had his hand in his pocket like he had a gun..so my peoples say he dipped in a store and my man walked past..he jist came out the store, then he like, you wanna fight or some'in, my man still got his hand in his pocket like he got a gun, my man jist bounced, he bounced..."

The fourth time the informant ran into the adversary, the confrontation turned more violent. The informant relates:

"...after that...we walking down Ocean...he came from out his house...so my peoples we jist spread out, I stopped walking I jist stood there...so my peoples was like wuz up man, you want to fight or some'in? My man jist threw up his hands like about to hit them and I had my walkman on, so I jist...smacked him across the face with it. His whole face was bleeding, he started running and we tried to catch him...he ran into the Puerto Rican store, we ran in the store after him, he tried to call the police, we smacked the phone out his hands, my people tried to grab him from behind the counter where they make the sandwiches at, he grabbed a knife, he swung it, I dipped, I ran, my people dipped, ...now we jist outside waiting for him to come outside, he ain't never come outside...he got the phone, dialed 911 and started screaming on the phone, so we left..."

The taunting continues days later. The informant relates:

"...then my peoples got locked up...now it's jist two of us that were fighting with him...we see him in the store, so we go in...he scream like, I kill you, gonna kill you, if we had caught him we would have beat him up...he ain't never want to come out, we jist left.

The adversary in this anecdote according to the informant sought protection from friends. Informant A:

"...he did come back, somebody said he seen him on bikes, it was like seven of 'em rode down the block and came by there they was like, the man looking for yall this and that...I'm by myself, I'm looking at them walking down, I was about to say some'in, but naw I ain't stupid."

On a deeper level, the common thread for fighting was a need to defend or maintain their status.

Elijah Anderson (1999) corroborates their need to constantly preserve and defend their status.

Respect.

In order to get respect in the streets, the informants had to acquire and build a reputation; they had to make themselves known. Informant V relates how he got his reputation:

"I got my rep when I was hustling. I sell drugs, I fight all the time, people respect me, cause I showed older people not my age, I fight older guys and it's like if they come at me the wrong way, try to harm me or shoot me, I get them first..., so that's how I got my name, al'right..."

Respect, in the case of these informants, was acquired by challenging someone thought to be tougher than they were, or by not backing down from confrontations.

Maintaining their reputation was critical to their survival in the streets. How they were perceived by their peers and others in the streets was of primal importance for street

life. The informant on why it is important to get a reputation:

Informant V: "It's like the streets, like everybody I run with, they got a reputation, like you ain't nobody, you don't count, like if you keep it quiet, don't bother anybody, they gonna harm you. You have to make a name for yourself and you have to make a name for yourself on the streets and then, the news travels."

Informant W: "...it seems you've make a name for yourself or people pick on you, so...I have to make a name for myself, let people know what I was about."

The violence encountered by the informants was not random. It was the ingredient used to maintain order in their neighborhoods and among the different groups. Achieving respect enhanced their sense of self and helped maintain their status in the streets. Informant V on respect:

"...everybody my age look up to me, ...Everybody like they respect me when they see me, they say whaz up, they know my name, but I don't know them..."

The price to establish or maintain respect included involvement with the Juvenile Justice System. Getting arrested multiple times was seen as an opportunity to gain respect by informant V:

"...I ain't really had no problems with that [getting arrested] I was getting respected..."

The informants agreed about the dangers involved in retaliation. There was a sense of hopelessness regarding

their options when confronted with fighting back; either way there was a risk to take, but none of the informants ever chose not to fight. Informant A explains:

"...if you go somewhere and somebody jump you, of course you gonna go back and get you peoples or whoever you know on the block with ya...you gonna go back and fuck'em up. You ain't gonna let nobody jump you... either way you look at it, if you don't come back they gonna start messing with ya everyday try and bother you or whatever. If you do come back, leads to guns, shooting and stuff like that, more fighting."

The shootings.

Not all the juvenile informants were exposed to shootings, although the ones that did not have access to a firearm stated that in difficult confrontations they would have used a gun if they had one. Informant W answers if he owned a firearm:

"Nope, would love to have one, but no I don't. It's something I would keep in my house. If somebody ever came...in my house, protection for my family, that's about it."

The ones that had access to a weapon confidently stated, that they would only carry their firearm when there was a need for it. They felt secure without it in such places as in school. Informant V responded to the issue of carrying a gun or other weapons at school in a simple manner:

"Naw, I never had to."

Informant A stated his reasons for carrying a firearm:

"I don't carry it on me unless it's called for...if we were beefing all of us have a gun."

Informant V stated that he had carried a gun in the past for his protection. The informant explains:

"It depends, sometimes, if I have to. Plenty times ...on me...I'm protecting myself..."

The informants that were involved in selling drugs were the ones that expressed a need to own a firearm. Incidents that involved the use of firearms centered on accidental shootings, drive-by shootings and retaliations due to "beefings". A "beef" is the conflict, the fight, issue or problem they were encountering. Informant A describes his participation in a drive-by shooting where the target, were others standing on a street corner:

"..somebody was shooting at me, I shot back, we was in a car, driving past and all of us was shooting.. from the car to the corner..more than one peoples was in the car shooting ..you know who they is, you know where they be at, that's how you know right where to be at, if you know them."

He explained his reasons for the shooting:

Informant A: "'cause they beefing. They had a fight or whatever, they had a fight or something over some stupid shit...somebody messed with you. It depends of whatever you fighting for...somebody trying to play you out, somebody stole something from you, they disrespect you."

The informant also provided his perception on the escalation of the conflict, that is, how the conflict got to the point where weapons were used against one another.

Informant A:

"...It starts out as a fight. If they get beat up or get jumped, they gonna go get a gun cause either way they got beat. If they can't beat you in fighting they gonna beat you another way."

The injuries.

The injuries were regarded as incidental to their struggle to survive the streets. The informants were not concerned with the outcome of the fights, not even if the outcome was death. Informant A provided his perception on the injuries associated with fights in this manner:

"You get beat up, but that happens, that happens once you be in a fight anyway, not every fight, you gonna lose a fight regardless. You might get scars on your legs, arms, stuff like that. They don't last long and you don't really feel the pain. You feel it but it don't hurt forever."

The injuries resulted in scrapes, scratches, contusions, knife wounds that required stitches, bullet wounds and the death of some of their friends. Informant A was stabbed on his thigh and required 40 stitches. He described the incident in this manner:

"Fight. Somebody trying to rob me, I was sitting on a car, they swung at me, I move back, somebody hit my leg and I ran."

For informant V, his injuries were over a period of time, in addition to being grazed by a bullet. Informant V:

"I god stabbed in my head, my neck, my arm, my eye, my back, my leg, may be six times...I've been shot at maybe

five or six times...by stickup boys during a mess in a fight"

The informant also described the injuries of one of his cousins who had been seriously injured during a shooting. Informant V:

"They had ta leave the bullets inside of him..one close to his heart...they tried surgery to get close to that one, but he got shot with a little gun 22 and they travel inside of you...it can kill him, so jist leave it in. Eventually he gonna die in the long run...by he being hit the wrong way...like the bullet is gonna move, go in his heart."

Views on death.

Although the juveniles did not express a wish to die, death was an acceptable possible outcome to life in the streets. The juvenile informants had a flat affect in their voices when discussing death. Death was viewed with detachment, inevitability and hopelessness. Informant V stated:

"...I jist got a call that I'm next. I wasn't that worried about it. I go ta sleep, if I die, it's al'right...I don't think about it"

One set of interviews was conducted around a period of time when some of one informant's friends had been shot; some of the one friend's injuries resulted in death. During this period of time, he lost other friends and two of his cousins were shot. In the background was the knowledge that he had received death threats; whether the threats would

materialize was unknown at the time the research was being conducted. Informant V:

"...they shot two of my cousins. I was next. You gotta deal with that everyday. They shot my boy, you see death every day."

The informant denied any affiliation with a specific group when discussing his perception on the number of people he knew who had been killed or may be killed.

Informant V:

"I ain't with no group. It's jist that, that's all you hear in the last two, they killed like fifteen people in two years. They say they gonna kill 30 people this month. Just like this last week every night there been a shoot out..."

The unpredictability of death, in the informant's case, i.e., when is it going to occur and the belief that it can be an inevitable event at the age of eighteen, provoked sleepless nights and concerns about family members. Finding out first about his cousins being shot, then getting the call that he was next, coupled with the death of other friends caused the informant to move from an attitude of not caring to one of sleepless nights. The informant explains his reasons for lack of sleep.

Informant V:

"Everything, everything going on out here, everything getting to me the streets...these deaths, everybody dying, I'm sad. Like last few days a lot of people died...same place, between Ocean and Jackson, that's it everybody getting shot over there."

His concerns about death centered around when the event would occur. When asked about some of the things that worry him about death he simply responded "my family". The informant expressed strong caring feelings about his mother and his helplessness in preventing her from the possibility of suffering about his loss. He explained having lost a son soon after birth and that experience gave him insight to the pain a parent feels at the loss of a child. Informant V:

"Right now, I'm jist telling my family to stay in the house...[if he died]she be hurt, she also sad, I know that she care. I'm her son. I know how it feel, I lost a son."

Feelings of guilt for not being there to protect a young man in his late twenties who had been shot to death within days of the interview indicate the strong bond that exists within members of this given group. The informant denied that his group was gang involved, but referred to it as a group of friends that had been together for many years and they were "family". The informant offered his reflection on the violent event involving his friend.

Informant V:

"..he knew he was gonna die one day, sooner or later, I should have been there for him or someptin. I feel sad he died, but everybody gonna die. The only one who really cared about it is his mother. He knew he gonna die. He had an A-K with two handles."

The degree of violence involved in establishing or maintaining status is exemplified in the informant's perception of the reasons for the shooting. Informant V:

"They was two people that died, they wasn't doing anything and one was jist coming up, wan'nin to take over his spot. The two of them died...they finally met up with each other, shoot each other right there..it like a one on one thing, just shooting at each other. They jist faced off, started shooting at each other face to face."

For the family of the victim, the security issues carried well into the funeral stages. The service for the victim was conducted in a secret location under surveillance to prevent a grieving moment from turning into a violent event. Informant V explains

"In case people don't shoot the funeral. Yeah he was like the most hated man in The City."

The informant was asked if he was still a target and if being a target had changed how he lives his life. This was his response:

"...I'm not worried about it...I'm not gonna walk around my whole life scared. I gotta go to work, it's still my life....still doing the same thing I do everyday, just that now I'm watching over my shoulders. I gotta go to work, I got a job."

Having a job offered the informant a positive view of life that helped him focus on something else besides being a target, at least for the time being. This was his first

job and he expressed aspirations of becoming a manager in a fast food establishment.

Bond with friends.

The bond with friends was described as a very strong one, second to the bond to family. When asked what was more important to him, his friends or his family, informant A responded:

"Family, your family still gonna matter more than your friends."

Informant W: "'cause that group of people is not gonna be on your side all the time. They on your side if all doing the same thing. But my mother was there for me more than my friends were. My mother will be by me 24-7..."

Concerns for the safety and well being of family members were of utmost importance to the juvenile informants. One informant did not want his younger brothers to follow him in the illegal drug trade and expected his brothers to remain in school. His frustration is heard in his voice when he talked about how to offer advice to his two younger brothers. Informant A:

"...if he start hustling I try to beat him up like I did the last two, try and stop them, I try to beat 'em up, keep 'em off the corner whatever, if it don't work, ain't nothin I can do."

Another informant made time to spend with a younger brother participating with him in recreational activities and filling the father role. He described his brother as

his son. Informant V wanted to offer his younger brother another view of life besides life in the streets. Informant V:

"...I always sit down and talk to him, you don't want to be like me, be yourself. I take him out, I take him bowling. I want him to know that there's better things out there for him..."

The bonds with friends developed through recreational activities, hanging out, being from the same block, selling drugs, getting high together, committing criminal activities together and being there for each other in times of need. One informant describes the strength of the bond with friends. Informant A:

"...you be 'round dem, those you friends, you be with dem, you get attach to dem. You get to the point where you will kill for dem, for most peoples."

The informant cited a situation where he would consider it necessary to assist a friend. Informant A:

"If some'in like I ain't got notin' to do with, I ain't got notin' to do with the fight, is my peoples fight or whatever or they shooting and somebody be screaming fuck that n----- up or some'in like that. Then, I'll be involve."

Informant V noted that "no one fights one on one anymore" making the support of friends critical for the survival of life in the streets.

Life in the streets provided opportunities to socialize with friends. Chillin' with friends to enjoy a

game of cards, darts, or pool; Chillin' with a girlfriend, chillin' to get high with their "boys" or just to stay out of trouble.

Life in the streets.

In order to survive in the streets the rules must be followed. The informants were well aware of them and implemented the rules which included making a name for themselves, establishing a reputation, establishing and maintaining status, not divulging their connections, developing a group of friends that can be counted on in a time of need, offering protection to friends and family, attacking only to defend family or friends, accepting the possibility of death at a young age, choosing family over friends. Informant V narrates how knowing the rules can prevent further violence, but also how one violent event can lead to another. The informant tells his story after his cousin had become the victim of a shooting. The confrontation occurred as the informant was on his way to meet the researcher to continue with the scheduled interview. Informant V:

"...they shot two of my cousins. I was next...he was looking for me, I was looking for him. So, like fuck it, I punched him once that was it...I messed his face up a little bit, that's it, rearranged it...ain't seen him since, but he out there...It happened like three O'clock, I was supposed to be here at four, couldn't come over...somebody looking for me, I ain't gonna hide.

I don't know what's gonna happen, but I ain't gonna hide....They had guns but they ain't use 'um. We all respect each other but it's like the one you shot near death, that's my cousin. In the streets, like you[the researcher] have your own rule, I have my own rule. Respect each other, so that we don't shot each other's boy. We could have jump one of them, but I just told them to chill."

The informant conceded that the "street's bad" and that his choices at this time in his life are "change, lock-up or death". Having "connects" allowed some of the informants the opportunity to acquire weapons for their protection. When asked what type of weapon informant V would carry, the informant simply stated:

"A burner, a magnum."

Although the informant did not reveal his "connects", he indicated that without "connects" one was unable to acquire an illegal firearm. The "connects" are never disclosed. That's part of the rules. Informant V indicates:

"Gotta have connects...if you don't know nobody, well, you're messed up..no one ever talks 'bout your connects. That's one of my rules. You only deal with that person nobody else."

They must also learn to deal with the police. The juvenile informants' perception of police presence in their neighborhood was not always clearly understood by the informant. Informant A describes his perception of police raids:

"They run you down. They see you on your cell or whatever, they set you up. They sit on a block and they wait. They lock you up sometimes or they jist wait, a whole bunch of police run down on a block, check everybody pockets or whatever jist like that, whoever got some money they get locked up."

Although the juvenile informants perceived they had received unfair treatment by the police they agreed that the best way to navigate the judicial system was to comply, even if the evidence gathered against them did not belong to them. They "take the charge", but they would not disclose who the evidence belonged to. Getting arrested once, placed them at higher risk for getting rearrested, for valid or invalid reasons.

In the informants' perception, the officers knew them and were familiar with their looks, making them easy targets when routine sweeps were made. Informant W relates how when he was coming out of his house to go see his mother at work he was picked up by the police because he looked like a suspect. The frustration and anger in his voice were clearly noticeable. Informant W:

"...I'm giving this lady directions on how to get to Hoboken. I see these two cop cars. One pulled on one side, one pulled on the other side. And I see 'em comin' up to me. I'm like I ain't do notin', so I'm not worried...How do I look like a robbery suspect? I just walked out my door from wakin' up. And she talkin' about, Oh I'll lock you up for sometin' you ain't do. That! Got me mad, and I started to get a little edgy with the cops. But then the Spanish cop pulled me over and talked to me...So, I, you know what

I'm saying, he was the only that talked to me like that, like a person, like a human being. So because of him talking to me, I calmed down. That was the only nice cop...I answered they questions, whatever they ask me, I answered."

Informant W had many unfortunate encounters with the police which led to police mistrust. Unfair treatment and unjust assumptions contributed to his general feeling of police mistrust. On one occasion he was stopped with the excuse that he had an open warrant. After the informant cleared that he had no such warrant the officer requested his assistance as a police informant. Informant W expressed his anger:

"...he just wanted to blackmail me, talking 'bout I know what's going on in the streets, this, that and the other, give them a call. I'm not gonna give you a call, that's your job. I'm not gonna be no rat, because you don't like what I am or who I am...I wanted to press charges, but my Mom was like forget about it..."

Perceived police corruption adds to their belief that they can not count on police for protection or fairness. The informant relates one of his experiences dealing with the possibility of arrest due to drug sales.

Informant V:

"Sometimes, sometimes like they take the money. They have it, they don't mess with you..."

Interpretation: Community violence.

The violent events experienced by the juvenile informants ranged from ordinary street fights to serious violent events involving firearms. The violent event was not a random occurrence, but a choice for the release of anger and a means to establish or maintain their status within their community or peer group. The need to constantly preserve and defend their status was corroborated by Elijah Anderson (1999).

In order to establish their reputation respect had to be gained. Respect was obtained by developing a name for themselves. They became known to other peers by engaging in violent events, not backing down from fights regardless of the age of the adversary or what consequences were brought by the violent event. Frequent arrests were not necessarily perceived by the juvenile informants as negative occurrences but as events that offered the opportunity to gain respect and help their reputation "grow".

Not all the juvenile informants were involved in severe violent events involving a firearm, however for the ones that had experienced the loss of friends, inevitability of death and hopelessness were issues the juvenile informants were struggling with at the time of the research. The notion that an adversary was looking to shoot

him and the knowledge that some friends had been shot or killed provoked sleepless nights and at the same time a resolve to continue with his daily activities. The apparent defiance to the dangerous threats provided a sense of normalcy to his life.

Although the juvenile informants perceived bonds to friends to be second to family bonds, friends were of crucial importance to survival in the streets. Friends provided unconditional protection from adversaries as needed. In addition, friends provided an opportunity to socialize and "chill". "Chillin" with friends to enjoy a game of cards, darts, or pool, "Chillin" with a girlfriend, "chillin" to get high with their "boys" or just to stay out of trouble.

Developing connections is an important aspect of survival in the streets. "Connects" offered the juvenile informants an opportunity to acquire items such as illegal weapons. In their perception, the firearms offered the juvenile informants protection in the event that disputes got out of their control.

Survival in the streets involved following the rules which included making a name for themselves, establishing a reputation, establishing and maintaining status, maintaining the "connects" secret, developing friends that

can be counted on in a time of need and attacking only to defend self, family or friends. Dealings with the police were common occurrences that produced mistrust. Police mistrust grew out of the juvenile's contacts while in the streets. The juvenile's perception that police could not be trusted reinforced the need for the rules of the streets. The juvenile's allegations that they were frequent targets of police raids contributed to the perception of police mistrust.

The rules of the streets provided order for life on the streets as perceived by the juvenile informants.

Sale and Use of Drugs

The juvenile informants' use of drugs and alcohol enabled them to bond with friends and escape from their individual stressor situations. Using drugs also filled a void left by boredom and general unstructured time. The sale of drugs, often led to violent confrontations.

Involvement with drugs led to arrests due to the sale or possession of an illegal substance. Arrests lead to days spent in the County Juvenile Detention Center, months in drug treatment programs and in the Juvenile Drug Court.

Drugs: First time.

For these juvenile informants the first time using drugs was out of curiosity for something that they observed

others do, either in their neighborhoods or on school grounds. Informant A explains:

"...I started smokin' when I got up to Dickinson. My first, like a month in high school I was smokin' weed."

Being able to fit in with friends was an important enough reason to motivate them to try an illegal substance. Afterwards the use of drugs that started as a curiosity or just to be "cool" turned into a way to self-medicate in order to find a way to relax. Informant W:

"... that's what it does for me, ease my nerves. Like if I'm settlin' down, it'll just put me in that mellow mood, that relaxed feeling, that's the only reason why I smoke..."

The age when they first started using drugs, varied. One juvenile tried it at age 12; another tried it once at age 11, although he did not habitually start using until he was 13, and another at age 14. Easy access to the illegal substance and familiarity with it desensitized its dangers. Informant A explains:

"My cousin came home...he had weed in the house, I stole it, went in the backyard and smoked it...ever since then I just started smoking."

For most of these juveniles freshman year in high school appears to mark the onset of drug use. The need to establish a name for themselves or maintain their status,

coupled with a need to develop a group or to belong to a group, made drug use an easy choice.

Informant V: "When I went to high school, I was 'round my friends, I was chillin', they smoke, it was in the environment and I liked it...I got used to it and I wanna be like everybody else..."

The preferred drug for these juvenile informants was "weed" or marijuana. Sometimes the blunt, a small cigar whose tobacco had been removed and replaced with the weed, is dipped in pcp for a stronger high. The weed is also rolled using the customary rolling paper. The frequency of use for these juveniles ranged from daily use to multiple times in one day. Informant W explains:

"..sometimes a joint, sometimes like two joints a day, sometimes like a blunt a day...that's the cigar we roll it up in. You bite the head of it off, you unroll the leaves; take the paper off of it, crack down the middle, putcha weed in there, roll it up, roll it back up in the leaf."

Smoking weed was an activity done alone or in the company of friends. The cost involved depended on the amount sought by the user. A nickel bag is five dollars and a dime bag is ten dollars. Informant W explains:

"A dime is a ten dollar bag...if you don't have no nicks, if you got all dimes, you jist get a little piece of paper, break enough to make a blunt and that's it. You know what I'm saying you jist break 'em down."

The juvenile informants had their usual dealer giving the buyer a false sense of security from police arrests.

The informant knew a couple of different dealers that were the only ones he bought marijuana from. He explains:

"Whoever got what I want, whoever I see first, you go. But only if I know 'em. Only if I know 'em. If I don't know you, naaah, I won't go to you. I jist say forgit it, and jist live widout it for that day, or that few hours."

Table 1 provides a view into the juvenile informants' drug use.

Table 1

Juvenile Informants' Drug Use

Drug Use	Informant A	Informant W	Informant M	Informant V
Used Drugs at Least Once	X	X	X	X
Used Marijuana Consistently	X	X		X
Hustled Drugs	X			X
Completed Drug Treatment Program				X
Frequently Absent From School	X	X	X	X
Dropped Out of School	X	X		X
Spent Time in the Juvenile Detention Center	X	X	X	X

Drugs: Hustling.

Not all the juvenile informants were involved in the sale of drugs; however, for those that did the sale of drugs began in the corner of their block, by observing older youngsters or family members conduct their business. Informant A, who started to hustle at age twelve explains:

"...they be with my cousins, I was jist sitting out there. I wasn't hustling or notin'. I was jist sitting out there a couple of months, jist chillin with them, watching what they doing. Got to the point I started doing what they doing...I jist started hustling...started hustling out on the corner..."

Informant V discussed how he began selling drugs:

"...I stand out front, I noticed that there were people selling where I be at. So I started selling drugs also...I knew that they was hustling and I was asking, they, they said you young, and I said, I know I want to sell, so they gave me my stuff."

These juvenile informants sold crack cocaine, but for their personal use, they smoked marijuana. At the time of the research, the juvenile informants denied ever having tried cocaine. Informant V expressed his views:

"I never used the drugs that I sold, but I smoke weed...I never used what I was selling..."

The sale of the illegal substance was perceived as a business and as such the basic business rules were followed. Invest in it and become your own man, thus maximizing their profits. Informant V explains:

"When you sell drugs, it's like hustling, it's like a job. You gonna sell drugs, you gotta do it everyday, that's what you work for, if you want to get paid...when I first started hustlin, right? I had a guy that owned me, I got used to the game, so I started going for myself and became my own man."

The reasons why these juvenile's sold illegal drugs included peer pressure, familiarity with the product and desensitization to the concept of the illegal action. However, the main factor for selling drugs was the need for money.

Informant V: "...I like to have money so I sold."

Informant A: "My family, my aunt and them, they got jobs, but me I was too young to get a job, only way I get one was by hustling."

According to one informant he could sell fifteen clips a day. Informant V explains:

"'bout fifteen clips a day...a clip is ten bottles ...cocaine...each bottle was ten dollars..."

The profits.

Informant V estimated his profit on a given day:

"...I used to bring home four hundred, four fifty, some time five. I jist go shopping."

For the most part the informants spent their profits on candy, clothes, gave money to household members, gave money to the absent father, treated friends and family members to social activities and bought marijuana for their personal use. Informant A:

"...I use to buy weed, alcohol, pcg, clothes, food, jist go out and party and stuff like that."

The informants had a general caring concern, besides for their mother, for the well being of their family members. Their absent father, cousins, brother and/or sisters benefited from the profits and risks associated with the sale of the illegal substance. Informant A discusses how he spent his profits:

"...buying them clothes, give my father and them money...they had money to pay for the rent. I was jist concerned about me and my cousins and my brothers, if they wanted something".

The risks.

The sale of illegal drugs involved risks such as violent events and police arrests, the latter leading to long stays in the County Juvenile Detention Center. The juvenile informants also risked being arrested for being in possession of someone else's stash. Informant V explained:

"...although it wasn't my stuff, I always plead guilty. No way around it. It was my charges so I gotta do time. I can handle it."

The rules of the street were intensified in this aspect of street life. Their stash, their merchandise had to be protected and as such defended. It was not enough to be able to sell the illegal drug, but it was important to be able to protect it, thus be able to maintain their status in the streets. Informant A offered his reasons:

"...you catch somebody stealing your stash there's gonna be a fight. You don't want to kill 'em, if you know 'em, you jist wanna beat 'em up."

Because the illegal sales took place on a street corner, the merchandise or stash was often kept near by, where the seller could access it, but yet be able to maintain a reasonable distance as to not arouse suspicions from the police. Therefore, the seller or sellers relied on the respect of each other's property in order to conduct their business. The stash was kept underneath the building's siding, in hidden places inside a building, in garbage cans, or any other creative place the seller found safe. Informant V explains:

" My stash was around the corner, stashed somewhere behind some bricks, behind the tiles."

If the stash was stolen, and the seller caught the thief in the act or found out who stole their stash, the result was a fight or it escalated to a more serious situation such as the beginning of a "beef". One of the informants related his experience when someone attempted to rob him while he was hustling. Informant A:

"...it was late, they asked, Do you got coke? 'cause he look older, like he wanted to buy some coke. So, I said yea, give me all of it, he pulled out his knife. I'm like, you ain't gitting notin', you ain't gitting what I got with no knife, know what I mean. He swung and missed my face, he swung at my face 'cause I dipped back, he caught my leg, like it took a big piece of meat out of me, it ain't like he stabbed me,

and I ran. I ran down the block into the backyard on the corner. I looked around the corner and he wasn't there, so I ran in the house...I did get forty stitches..."

All the juvenile informants had multiple arrests.

Many of those arrests were for drug related charges, either selling or using.

Juvenile drug court.

The juvenile informants who participated in the study were also participants in the Juvenile Drug Court Program. There was no Adult Drug Court program at the time of the study, therefore this narrative will use the term Drug Court when referring to the Juvenile Drug Court.

The Drug Court program does not accept juveniles with aggravated assault or weapon charges. In the case of the juvenile informants, although they had experienced and enacted violent events they were never charged with any offenses that would exclude them from participation in the Drug Court program. One of the juvenile informants shared his thoughts as he decided if he would participate in the Drug Court Program. Informant V:

"'cause like, I got home, I get locked up like two weeks later, with another charge, every chance I get I get high, so I gotta go ta court. First they was talking like some five years, I told my prosecutor hell no. At first I was jist playing like do the drug program, but after I said, What's Drug Court?..."

The Drug Court program is a highly supervised program for the treatment of substance abuse. The juveniles are expected to attend treatment, to be enrolled in school or to be working, and they are expected to report for a court audience once every other week accompanied by a parent or guardian. Informant V reported:

"It gave me a lot of options they was making me go to school really...since I was in there, I ain't smoke...I couldn't drink either so I stopped drinking..."

The staff for the program consists of a Drug Court coordinator, a probation officer and the Drug Court judge. Out-patient treatment for drug use is provided by a local facility that has been contracted by Drug Court to provide the required treatment. In-patient treatment is available for the more acute cases of drug use.

The Drug Court staff works in partnership with the county prosecutor's office to determine which cases are appropriate for the program, the premise being that the drug charge will be dismissed after satisfactory completion of the Drug Court program. If the juvenile fails to complete the program, the charges are referred back to juvenile court and disposed of accordingly. One of the informants provided his understanding of the consequences for failure to successfully complete the Drug Court program. Informant W:

"If you stay away from the drugs, you get out, the charges are dismissed, but if you don't you can go to Jamesburg... [Jamesburg]it's like a juvenile prison."

The juveniles understood that the alternative to Drug Court most likely would not be treatment oriented. The juvenile informant offers his perception about the difference between confinement and a drug treatment program. Informant W:

"Jamesburg, I won't be getting no help. They jist be, they label me as a criminal, you know what I'm sayin' and the inpatient program, they try to help you and get you back on the, on a right track, as they say."

The length of time the juvenile would be expected to be out of the home appeared to be a strong factor when faced with the choice of compliance with the Drug Court regulations or having their case processed through the Juvenile Justice System. Informant W discussed his choices and reasons:

"I don't wanna go ta no inpatient for 18 months...if [judge]he say like a few months in Jamesburg, I'll take the few months in Jamesburg, instead of being in an inpatient program for 18 months."

Although he eventually opted for the Drug Court Program an informant shared his thoughts as he decided which way to go. Informant V:

"First two months I been here, I really ain't care about this program. I wouldn't even care if they locked me up, I rather do my time..."

Reporting before the Drug Court Judge is done in a group, contrary to regular juvenile proceedings which are conducted individually to assure confidentiality. Appearing before the Court are the Drug Court coordinator, the probation officer assigned to the program, a representative from the treatment facility, the juveniles and their parent or guardian. In special cases, the juvenile may appear alone. Since Court appearances are every other week, it is sometimes a hardship for a working parent or guardian to appear. The Court appearances are conducted on Tuesdays at four- thirty in the afternoon. Informant W describes a typical appearance before the Drug Court Judge:

"...you see the judge, and the people from the program, they see how you doing...every other Tuesday."

At the appearances, the Judge hears about the juvenile's general progress, results of recent urine tests, and any other difficulties the juvenile may be experiencing. The juvenile's behavior is closely monitored.

An overnight or weekend stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center is an option the Judge uses at his discretion depending on the degree of the juvenile's lack of progress. Informant V relates his experiences during his first two months in the Drug Court program:

"...they lock me up every week, two days, three days, I was getting tired of that shit, man, they was like man you got violations, but man, I ain't doing another

day, fuck it, I'm jist gonna be here, ever since that, I started doing good. I ain't feel like being locked up no more."

The usual infraction is the use of drugs or alcohol while in the program. The program demands a decrease in the amount of the chemical substance found in the juvenile's urine. Informant V clarifies:

"..you be in phase one. Takes like three months, know what I'm sayin'...if you get three months worth of clean urine, whenever they test you and your urine clean, then they gonna make a proposition to the judge to see if, you know, you can go to phase two."

Relapses are expected. The juveniles are counseled and supported as they go through the process of accepting their addiction and eventually, treatment. However, some offenders try creative ways to mask the chemistry in their urine. Informant W:

"Drink a whole lotta of water, cranberry juice. You can take little pills that clean your system out. After you do that you can't smoke at all. It'll bring the levels down real low. So like if I smoke Sunday, I ain't smoke at all Monday, Tuesday, by Wednesday...it'll be trace, but it'll be real low. You know what I'm saying, so it look like I ain't really been smoking."

The treatment aspects of the program required the juvenile informants' cooperation as well as the commitment of the treatment staff. The juvenile informants recognized that the staff was interested in their improvement. That

perceived interest in their well being helped the juveniles improve. Informant V:

"...I needed a job anyway, like, I couldn't be in the program without a job, 'cause like I'm not in school no more, and I'm eighteen now, so they consider me an adult, so don't really gotta go to school, but like they want me to better myself, they don't want me to go back to my past, like they jist want me to move on."

The struggles with treatment are many. There are issues with lack of health insurance besides the known dynamics surrounding the issue of drug treatment. Informant W discusses his difficulties accepting treatment:

"...I do need assistance, but it's like I'm fighting it off, I don't know, I don't know why I'm fighting it off. 'cause I guess I can win this war by myself..."

The results with Drug Court for the juvenile informants varied. An informant was terminated from Drug Court after he was arrested for selling drugs. Informant A explains:

"...they sent me home on Giant Step with Drug Court...I got arrested a month later...I wasn't hustling like I use to hustle like everyday. Use to come out like two times out of the week. It was jist one of those days I decided to come out and got locked-up."

At the time of the research interviews he was not sure how his case was going to be handled. Another informant was terminated after a year for lack of progress and innumerable relapses. At the time of the research interviews, the informant was considering taking his case

involving possession of an illegal substance to trial. His thoughts as he struggled with the possibility of a sentence to Jamesburg. Informant W:

"Knowing how they think, probably request for me to be locked up in Jamesburg or somewhere."

Another informant was expected to graduate from Drug Court the day after the conclusion of the research interviews. He had tested negative for the use of drugs for over 140 days, had not been rearrested, maintained a job and was looking into the possibility of obtaining his GED. Informant V's thoughts at the successful completion of his treatment:

"I thought I wasn't gonna make it through their program, but somehow I did...I don't know what's gonna happen....I'm saying the good thing about Drug Court, is like they help you find a job, or if you need help or someptin, they'll try to help you, but other than than, you're out, you gotta leave them."

It was unknown at the completion of the research if Informant V was able to meet his goal of getting his GED. The informant expressed his frustration with other's perception that he really had not made any changes in his life. His mother doubted that he would be able to stay out of trouble, since he was still keeping the same friends. Informant V:

"...shit man, my family, right, they think I'm still out there hustling, I be seeing lot of things out there, so nobody see me outside, they probably saying, I'm

hustling, see me shopping, I'm buying all this, they don't know what I got, they don't know how I get my money...I know I'm trying to change, whatever, people still talking about me, that shit make me upset...they still out there hustling, but they still doing wrong, I'm just out there, I just work, just chill. Don't have time for that shit no more."

Interpretation: Sale and use of drugs.

The purpose of the narrative interpretation for the Sale and Used of Drugs was not to analyze the dynamics of drug treatment, but how the sale and use of drugs made a presence in the lives of the juvenile informants as they struggle with life in the streets. Following the rules of the streets, i.e., establishing and maintaining status, having a reputation, being able to defend and protect self and that which belongs to them, were intensified in this aspect of street life.

For these juvenile informants the sale of illegal drugs provided them with a source of income and business like skills. Their surrounding areas, i.e., the near-by vacant lot, the garbage can or the siding tile of a building became the store shelves to keep their product. Because the product could not be always guarded, respect for each other's merchandise played an important role. Being able to protect their "stash" involved risking bodily injuries and ongoing feuds.

By observing their surroundings, the juvenile informants' curiosity was triggered. They learned that there was a product to sell which yielded a high demand. Their need for money became the main catalyst for their involvement in the sale of drugs. They also learned that in order to obtain a greater return they had to cut the number of people between the product and the profit, thus becoming their "own man".

The juvenile informants although smoked marijuana habitually did not use the product they were selling at the time on this research. They thought that it was "stupid" to use crack cocaine, but saw nothing wrong in their choice of marijuana.

Their use and sale of illegal drugs generated many arrests and involvement with the Juvenile Drug Court Program in their area. Involvement with Drug Court as the juveniles referred to it, offered the juvenile informants a chance to receive treatment in exchange the drug related charges would be dropped. However, it appears that besides the treatment option, the juvenile informants were able to think and process the actions that led them to Drug Court.

Contemplating on their actions offered them the opportunity to make changes that provoked hope for a better future. By the end of the research the juvenile informants

were struggling with treatment and decisions concerning their legal status.

Experiences with the Juvenile Justice System

All the juvenile informants had been arrested multiple times. The offenses committed included assaults, being in possession of stolen property, i.e., a stolen car, sale and possession of controlled dangerous substances (cbs), making threats, outstanding warrants as results of non-compliance with court orders or non-compliance with the recommendations of probation officers. The juvenile informants started getting involved in the Juvenile Justice System between the ages of twelve and fourteen.

The county juvenile detention center.

Being arrested was one thing, but spending time in the County Juvenile Detention Center or youth house as the juveniles referred to it, was of concern for the juvenile informants, at least the first time. One of the juvenile informants remembers his first night in the County Juvenile Detention Center. Informant A:

"...your first night going back there, you think it's a dream, I thought it was a dream. I knew I was in there, but when it came time to go ta sleep, I couldn't go ta sleep, then I was like, I wake up, I ain't gonna be in this again, you wake up you in there again."

All the juvenile informants had been arrested

multiple times and many of those arrests required a temporary stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center.

The County Juvenile Detention Center is located on grounds owned by the county. It is a relatively new facility built circa 1995 for a total number of seventy five beds. The facility was designed so that each juvenile had his or her own room. However, the juvenile count has been as high as 169 juvenile residents. The recent count is closer to ninety. The facility has state of the art security, a nurse's station, social workers, a weight room, a courtyard, rooms put aside for school related purposes, a cafeteria, a recreation room and various administrative offices. The rooms are separated into units which are organized to accommodate both, males and females, different age groups and different levels of behavior.

The data revealed that restrictions for misbehaving while in the County Juvenile Detention Center encompassed staying in the room for hours or up to two days without talking to anyone. Informant A explains:

"They restrict you, lock you in a room and take your privileges, you can't play cards, listen to the walkman...depending on what you do. If you like, room charge is for two hours. If you sleep in the room that's like you getting over, you jist don't sleep, you jist do whatever. If you banging on the door, cursing and do stuff like that, they leave you in there longer, 'till you come down, to they feel like you ready to come out."

Another informant related his experience while on restriction in the County Juvenile Detention Center.

Informant V:

"I jist use to fight all the time so most of the time I be on restriction...they take the mat out of your room, your blanket, your sheets. You have to undress, you be there with like your shorts, no shoes, no shirt on, you cold, you be by yourself no body around you all day. You could be there for hours sometimes you can be in there for two days, depends on what you done."

Same as the streets.

The juvenile informants viewed life in the youth house the same as life in the streets, one of the informants provides his perception. Informant V:

"..I can't really tell you, like explain the youth house 'cause it be seeming like I spent it in the streets, like, I never really had no problems with it. For other people it's like, like they were suffering."

The rules of the streets, therefore were followed in the County Juvenile Detention Center. Maintaining their status became a task to accomplish. The status was maintained by engaging in fights, thus establishing hierarchy by being known. The informant shared what he perceived his choices were with regards to fighting while in the County Juvenile Detention Center. Informant V:

"I'm telling you, right, It's like street to me, I got a lot of respect in there. Noting changed in there, I'll fight if I want to or jist sit back and relax. Jist see what happen all day..."

Conversely, the reputation the juveniles developed while in the County Juvenile Detention Center followed them to the streets. An informant expressed his reasons for fighting and the opportunity it gave him and his adversary to acquire respect. Informant V:

"...I was raised on the street so I like to fight, that's how I got my reputation at the youth house, I jist start fighting everyday. I don't have no problems with nobody, so if nobody is trying to fight me, I gotta look for my own fights, like if they keep looking up to me I'm like damn, I jist keep starting more trouble and more trouble and I'm making my rep grow, I'm making they rep grow by them fighting with me, people will respect them too."

Defending their status in the County Juvenile Detention Center provoked thoughts of possible defeat.

Informant V explains:

"...be yourself in the youth house, that ain't no fun place to be in, cause you gonna have your bad days, somebody gonna come in bigger than you, stronger than you, and they probably gonna act like the same way you do, be like you are..."

The informant continued with his description of some injuries received by some residents of the County Juvenile Detention Center:

"...I seen people get beat up, bloody lip, broken jaws, people pass out, there's a lot of stuff that go on over there in the youth house. People don't really know about it 'till you go in there...you can get beat up in there everyday...people never know about it..."

Maintaining status in the County Juvenile Detention Center also involved developing a relationship with the guards. The relationship with the guards included doing "favours" for the guards in return for special treatment, making a stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center less unbearable. How the guards selected their target, who to ask "favours" from or how widespread the behavior was not cleared. The following is informant V's perception:

"It's like if they don't like that person, they will come to me, like, I don't like 'em, do this, do that whatever. I tell 'em what I want and I do it."

The goal for the juvenile informants while they were in the County Juvenile Detention Center was daily survival. Their daily survival was achieved by following the rules of the streets. Not disclosing the type of activity requested by some of the guards assured a tighter bond with their captors. The juvenile's needs to survive and to continue being the stronger ones in yet another setting, precluded such an action. While in detention, the informants had to find a way to make their stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center as comfortable as possible. Besides establishing and maintaining their status, the sense of getting what they wanted became the catalyst for many of their actions while in the County Juvenile Detention Center. The informant explains:

"It ain't make me no difference. I jist hadda do what I hadda do. There was something I wannned and I hadda go and get it."

The "favours" described required getting involved in fights with other residents selected by the guards. If the informant did not wish to do the "favor" he would send someone else to do it. For fear of retaliation those asked to complete such a task were unable to refuse. The sense of power and control over some of the residents is expressed by an informant who had experienced the County Juvenile Detention Center twelve times. The informant explains:

"...Like somebody who didn't know me could refuse it, but if they knew me, couldn't refuse me...if they ain't wanna do it, I fuck 'em up too. They had to do whatever I wannned over there."

According to the informant, the action to be taken was left up to the juvenile. The guard only related who needed to be taken care of; the juvenile decided how. The informant clarifies:

"They just say fuck 'em up. That's it...I start taking off on 'em [the resident], I just start saying things ta 'em like, walk up to 'em and start swinging at 'em...you locked-up shit, you gotta defend yourself."

The reasons why a guard would engage in such activities were unknown to the juvenile informants, other than not liking a juvenile resident of the County Juvenile Detention Center. The juvenile expressed his perception:

"If the COs don't like somebody, somebody get on their nerves, beat them up, or whatever. Sometimes they ask for no reason."

An informant provided his perception on who is selected to do the "favor":

"Like some CO's don't mess with anybody. Like if they really know you, they'll ask you for a favor, but if they don't know you, they don't mess with you like that, they jist do they job. But if they know ya, they gonna ask a favor."

The juvenile informants who had a special relationship with the guards were not interested in the guard's reasons. Their concern was the privileges they could enjoy while in detention. The privileges included eating at any time, eating whatever quantities they desired and having their own "lock-down time" or sleep time. An informant discussed the special privileges as a result of the alleged "favor" and his reasons for doing the "favor":

"Certain people ask for cigarettes, if they ask for it they get it. Like me, I asked for cigarettes, you can ask for weed..it's easy, if they mess with you like that, you jist have to do that favor..I locked down anytime I wanted. I eat anytime I wanted, could ask for food whenever I wanted, period...I beat up whoever ya told me. Like I do whatever I gotta do. I'm still surviving."

As in the streets, the perceived absence of official protection served as a means to perpetuate the rules of the streets. Not all residents who were assaulted or provoked were a guard's target. Some of the residents of the County

Juvenile Detention Center that were unable to fence off attackers were exposed to continuous taunting, bullying and violent events. Informant V explains:

"Every morning people be like crying, they wanna go home. They get beat up everyday, some people don't eat at all. People like, they be there for months and they don't eat at all, 'cause they take their food, they beat on them. They go to the hospital and get sick and jist stay in the hospital. Some people get raped."

According to the informant the "rape" incidents do not get reported because the rape victims are ashamed and afraid of being taunted once they return to their neighborhoods. The informant provided his perception for the victim's silence:

"It don't get reported 'cause like the person that get rape, they be scare to tell people because they don't want people to know they got their manhood taken away from them.."

The juvenile informants' perception was that the residents of the County Juvenile Detention Center do not have an opportunity to tell their parents about their experiences in the County Juvenile Detention Center. The informant provided his perception:

"Ah, the COs, they scare that they gonna lose their job for letting you fight. Some people be like well I'm gonna tell my mother, but if you don't see them all the time, how you gonna tell all that? If you can't get no phone call, you jist gonna get locked up in your room all day. Ain't nobody gonna do notin..."

Views toward justice.

Although the juvenile informants had been involved with the Juvenile Justice System on several occasions they did not seem clear about the role played by each of the parties involved in their case, such as the prosecutor and the public defender. The attitude towards the police was of mistrust and frustration.

The informants did not view the police as an entity that would protect them. On the contrary the police was viewed as liars and bullies that used their legal status to intimidate them. This is the perception of informant W:

"...it's like they, they, they suppose to be protectin' and servin', but everything that they stand for, they breakin. The rules that they got and they stand for, they break half of 'em."

Another informant related his opinion. Informant V:

"Its like the police would jump out on me, since they know me, they snatch me up. I have money in my pocket, they'll count my money, they start looking for stashes, they found somebody else drugs, they put on me cause I have the most money. When we go to court, there is no sense going to trial, 'cause I know I'm gonna lose. They're gonna say that it' my stuff, know what I mean."

The police was viewed as being the voice the judicial system would listen to. The informants perceived that their word was worthless against the testimony of police officers. The informants did not complain about instances when they had committed illegal acts, but were frustrated

about being frequently labeled as a suspect or being charged for acts they did not commit. An informant explains:

"...when you go to court and you say, judge, I didn't do this, this, that, judge ain't gonna listen to you, judge gonna listen to the police."

All of the informants were upset with the role their assigned public defender played in their case. The public defender was not perceived as a "real lawyer"; thus they did not feel well represented if they had a public defender. The general feel was that the public defender was interested in closing the case and getting paid.

The informants stated that on some occasions they plead guilty because they were instructed by their public defender, or they were asked by their parent or guardian in order to just finish with the court situation or for fear of losing the case. An informant told his story with anger in his voice. Informant W:

"They, they, they, they, open and shut. I told, like I told my public defender, I didn't have noting to do with this. I had no knowledge of it. Plead guilty, plead guilty. Why should I plead guilty if I ain't do sometin. Plead guilty, you might take to trial, you might lose...the only reason why I pleaded guilty because my mom, she like, just plead guilty, git over with, jist pay the fine. I, and stupid me for listening to my mother and pleading guilty..."

The informants lacked general understanding of the law. It was difficult for them to understand culpability

when the offense occurred in the company of others, especially when the offense was drug related, such as picking up a charge for being around those that had illegal substances. An informant retells one of his encounters with the legal system. Informant W:

"It was my friend's, this girl's birthday; she invited me to the bowling alley; I brought enough money to pay for my way. I assumed everybody had enough money to pay they own way. They wound up leaving an \$80.00 bill, I wound up being the last person, I wound up being arrested. I gave the cops each and every name of the people that was there. You think when I went to court, you think they tried to subpoena all those people to come to testify whether I was wrong or not? I wound up having to plead guilty to sometin I ain't do and paying almost a hundred dollar fine for sometin I didn't do. That's why I don't believe in the public defender, I don't believe in police, and half a the time I don't believe in the court system...I don't have money for a lawyer, so, that's why I plead guilty, 'cause I didn't have money for a lawyer, and, the public defenders don't care if you go up the road or not. They jist about the money and the next case. Money, the next case."

It was unclear from the research data what role the juvenile's lack of knowledge about the law played in their relationship with their public defender. Their perception about what a "lawyer" could do for them versus what a public defender could do may have been affected by their lack of knowledge about the intricacies of the law and their expectations of authority and caretakers. In addition, the informants perceived that if they were not liked by the public defender or if the public defender was

aware of their reputation, then their defense would be compromised. An informant tells his experiences with the office of the public defender. Informant V:

"...you take it to trial or sometin, you my lawyer you suppose to defend me...like if they don't like you, then they be like man do the time, I'm like I don't know. I know that there were a couple of mother fuckers who told me to do the time, I'm like no, hell no, I ain't doing no time. It's like, they know how like, you got a reputation, like, it's like the way you carry yourself maan, like you carry yourself the wrong way, they like fuck you, don't waste my time and do your time, whatever. I don't waste my time, I just, get out of this program on my own. Get outta this system."

Interpretation: Experiences with the juvenile justice system.

Although the juvenile informants did not like or want to be arrested and sent to the County Juvenile Detention Center, their stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center was seen as an opportunity to work on their reputation. The County Juvenile Detention Center established to temporarily confine juveniles accused of breaking the law and seen by the general public as a place of civil order was perceived by the juvenile informants as being "same as the streets". With the juvenile's perception that the County Juvenile Detention Center was a place equal or similar to street life, the rules of the streets were but a reasonable assumption for the juveniles to adopt. An informant's perception "just like living out in the streets" stressed

the juvenile informants' view of life in the County Juvenile Detention Center.

Life in the County Juvenile Detention Center for the juvenile informants meant that self-protection was up to them while at the same time their stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center offered an opportunity to establish or maintain their reputation. The juvenile's perception that official order was lacking in the County Juvenile Detention Center was reinforced not only by their views of street life in the County Juvenile Detention Center, but by their experience in dealing with the guards who were supposed to not only maintain order, but also offer protection as the juveniles awaited for their legal matter to be completed.

What the juvenile informants perceived as a "favor" for a guard while they were in detention, is at the very least coercion and intimidation by someone being viewed as authority. The data did not indicate how wide spread is this practice. The purpose of the interpretation of this narrative, however, was not to analyze the conduct of the guards in the County Juvenile Detention Center, but to assert how the rules of the streets applied to a stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center. The juvenile's need to survive in the County Juvenile Detention Center couple

with their need to maintain their status made establishing a relationship with the guards a task to achieve.

The juvenile's status was maintained by engaging in fights, whether the fights were provoked or unprovoked. The juvenile's ability to win a fight enhanced their reputation not only in the County Juvenile Detention Center but out in the streets as well. Fighting thus, provided an opportunity to maintain their reputation not only for the juvenile informant, but also for the adversary. The statement by one of the juvenile informants "I'm making they rep grow by them fighting with me, people will respect them too", indicates that fighting someone perceived as being bigger or older granted the adversary status, even if the outcome was defeat for the adversary.

Mistrust for the Juvenile Justice System was a general perception by the juvenile informants. The role and actions of the police were coupled with the role and action of the public defenders. The juvenile informants did not differentiate between enforcing the law by the police and defending the law by the public defender. This may be attributed to their lack of proper information about the judicial system in general. The juvenile informants had difficulties understanding culpability, especially when the offense was committed in the company of others.

School and School Related Violence

The school district the juveniles belonged to offers several different types of alternative education programs, along with many innovative magnet programs found in the local high schools. For the purpose of this study, the focus was placed on the school district's Zero Tolerance Program and the challenges faced by one school district high school, Tigers High School.

Academic background.

The juveniles in general, experienced academic difficulties. Their combined educational experience reflected special education services due to learning and behavioral problems, as well as not being able to graduate high school. Of the four juveniles interviewed only one was a few months away from graduating high school. The other three dropped out of school for reasons such as too many arrests that required spending time in the County Juvenile Detention Center and excessive absences.

Informant A attended school up to the seventh grade. He summarized his school experience in this manner:

"..all the way to the 7th grade I been doing good, I was a good kid, and I started hustling and stuff like that, I ain't have time for school. Be mostly in the street..."

Informant V was able to enroll in high school, but dropped out.

Informant V: "I ain't get along with like three teachers. I didn't like 'em, they ain't like me, so, I used to sleep in class. They used to give stuff in class that I didn't wanna do. I always did in class what I wanna do. I ain't never been in high school for a full year, either I got suspended or locked up.."

Tigers High.

The data from this study reveals that Tigers High School is located in one of the city's poorest areas. The crime rate is high and drug deals take place in broad day light. The high school is adjacent to a police precinct, but regardless of police proximity the issues with fights and other incident continue to take place.

The school administrator informant describes critical changes that have taken place at Tigers High. Informant ADM:

"In February 2002, the superintendent of schools decided to make a change at Tigers High School and took out the former administrative team and put in an educational leadership team consisting of six people... I'm the person in charge of Special Education.."

The goal was to improve discipline and instruction, regain building control and provide adequate safety and security to students and staff alike.

According to the October 15th count for the academic year 2002-2003 the enrollment at Tigers High School was

1261 students of which 445 were eligible to receive special education services. Informant ADM relates the difficulties of the student body:

"...it's roughly one third to half of the building that are classified special education. Of those special ed. student, there are many that have behavior problems. There are also many general ed. students that have behavior problems as well. So in terms of the percentage of building students, I would say it's at least fifty percent that have some sort of behavior problem."

The State mandated High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) for the academic year 2001-2002 indicate that of the city's six high schools Tigers High scores were the lowest not meeting the State Standard of 85 percent. Tigers High scores were 51.6 percent in language arts literacy and 19.9 percent in mathematics (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002e).

The teaching staff in the special education department at the high school is in serious need of training and support. There are 17 teachers of the handicapped working with emergency certifications. That is, 17 teachers out of 36, just under 50 percent of the special education teachers lack proper training in a most needed area, how to teach the learning and emotional disabled. The frustration is felt in the words of informant ADM:

"...as you just heard in the phone call, the caller was asking me how many emergency certificates were in special ed. I counted it up and we came to seventeen. That's seventeen! out of thirty six people are

emergency certs..."

In general terms the staff at Tigers High has a high absenteeism rate. The presence of substitutes is seen as a contributing factor to the daily challenges that are faced at Tigers High. ADM explains:

"The kids do not respond to substitute teachers and they will just get up and walk out of the classroom and on a day with bad weather or before a holiday or on a day when teachers will normally take off, that's when we are on our weakest in terms of teacher presence in the building and the high number of substitutes."

In addition to the substitutes lack of training, their native language in many cases is not English and their cultural background compounds the problem. Many substitutes, even after they are trained do not return to Tigers High. Informant ADM offers his perception:

"Many people from other countries can't comprehend the way our kids act and therefore they can't predict it, they can't be proactive about it, and it's also the nature of the beast, I mean, a sub is a sub, is a sub. Kids don't take them as seriously as other teachers."

The informant estimates that at least once a week there are a minimum of ten teachers absent. Besides teacher absences there are many vacant positions in the areas of math and science.

A day at Tigers High.

The day at Tigers High for the students starts at 8:25 am with the electronic wanding of all students who enter

the building. The use of electronic wandling was instituted in all high schools for all students during the academic year 2002-2003 after a student was shot in another high school in October 2002. Informant ADM:

"Unfortunately, wandling started after the student was shot in Lincoln High School earlier this year."

Wandling concludes at 8:50 am. Tigers High does not have a closed lunch period, so that random wandling takes place in the afternoon. The use of metal detectors are said to be placed on order for use at a future date. After 8:50am the students who are late must report to another entrance of the building for wandling. The administrators also conduct sweeps of all the floors looking for students who may not be in their classes.

For the administrators, the multitude of problems that arise on a moment to moment basis must be addressed immediately leaving little time for the completion of other administrative duties, such as teacher evaluations, completion of reports requested by central office etc. ADM explains:

" ...I can sit at this desk and hear screaming out in the hallway. Just kids having a good time 'cause they walked out of class. I have to respond to it. I have to leave my desk and by the time I settle that, I may not be in my office for two to three hours."

The frustration felt by the administrators at Tigers

High in finding a balance between the daily crises and their administrative duties is clearly stated by informant

ADM:

"...you really have to sequester yourself in your office, and you can't at times respond to a noise that you hear in the hallway or kids yelling, because if you go out there, it may take up, you know, it may set you into a chain of events that may finish you for the rest of the day."

Problems the staff faces at Tigers High.

At the time of this study, the staff at Tigers High was experiencing frustration over various changes that were taking place. The informant cited serious problems with scheduling such as veteran teachers who were teaching areas they had not taught in awhile, teachers going to three different floors in addition to having students in the wrong program, i.e., regular education students in special education courses and visa versa. Informant ADM:

"...If a kid was placed in a classroom and you had to change that kid, the kid felt disrupted, even though, you were making the change for the better. The students didn't understand it, the teachers didn't understand how we let it happen...certain assurances were given that the person could do scheduling...that was the something that really soured the teachers against the educational leadership team, because she did represent the team, in that aspect."

The administration was aware of these problems and had taken proper measures to correct them. Other corrections such as the teacher schedules would have to wait until the

spring semester or the next academic year.

The creation of a central copy location in order to control expenditures and also to control the use of dittos in the classroom has upset many teachers. Informant ADM states his reason:

"...The special ed copy alone had close to 400,000 copies made on it last year...that's a tremendous amount of copies... That tells you that teachers are resorting to ditto sheets too much and it tells you that no way a normal machine can withstand that kind of volume..."

Teachers are forced to plan well in advance for the use of copies. The material must be handed in to be copied and it is returned to the teacher a day later. Supplies have also been centralized and teachers are required to place a formal order before supplies can be given out.

Low morale has been an issue also as well. There was an off campus shooting during the lunch period in the fall of 2002, where a student from Tigers High was shot in the foot. That shooting scared many teachers. The wandering has delayed many students coming to class on time. There have been difficulties experienced with putting into place a new late room and in-school suspension policy. Informant's ADM perception regarding teacher morale:

"...teachers have said, well, jeez, I wonder who's in charge here, and I wonder if this is the right place for us to work. The latest thing that has hit us is security has turned over."

A well-trained security staff is as important to Tigers High as the teaching staff. Security guards are civil service employees and as such must follow the guidelines under civil service. Although the security staff at Tigers High was well trained, many of its security guards had not passed or taken the civil service test and thus need to be replaced. This adds another layer to the frail internal structure of Tigers High. Informant ADM summarizes it in this manner.

"...so that has been another nail in the coffin so to speak. So now in February we're expecting our good security guards to leave and we will have to take new security guards. So, ah, it seems as if we can't get a break..."

Behavior problems at Tigers High.

The types of behavior problems at Tigers High are numerous. There is chronic cutting and absenteeism, fighting, theft, bullying, sexual harassment, setting fire to school property, yelling in the hallways and in the classrooms, cursing, daily occurrences of students walking out of class without permission and students suspected of coming to school under the influence of drugs.

Table 2 breaks down the possible consequences for the different kinds of inappropriate school behavior. Consequences varied from in-school suspensions for "acting-out" behavior and fights to police involvement for assaults

and threats to staff and possession of firearms in schools by students.

Table 2

Kinds of Inappropriate School Behavior and Possible Consequences

Behavior	Zero Tolerance	Out of School	Out of School	In School Suspension
Assaults Staff	X	X		
Robs Teachers	X	X		
Disrupts Class, Walks Out of Class, Curses, Yells, Harasses, Cuts Class			X	X
Assaults Students	X		X	X
Brings Weapons To School	X		X	X
Firearms in School	X	X		
Uses Weapons While Fighting	X	X		
Arson	X	X		
Make Terroristic Threats to Staff	X	X		

Of all the behaviors present at Tigers High, fighting is perhaps the most complex of all. Fighting can occur on a one on one basis or as part of a larger group. Fighting occurs within a group and among groups. According to the

informant, very few altercations originate in the building. Students may bump into each other and keep on walking or they may briefly discuss it. Usually, there is staff presence to help dilute the incident. However, the more serious confrontations are as a result of events that have occurred or are occurring in the community, in their neighborhoods. Informant ADM describes the actions taken to control a situation that had the potential to escalate within the school building:

"...by 8:45 we had many members of these two opposing crews corralled...we had broken up a disturbance on the first floor. We took everybody connected with that, I had broken up a disturbance on another part of the first floor; I took everybody connected with that, and we immediately started our gang mediation sessions...as late as 10:30 we were still working on gang mediation. We continued until about 11:15..we thought everything was squashed and we dismissed the kids for lunch and thank God the shooting did not occur in Tigers High School, it was not one of our students who was the shooter..we did a good job by mediating this whole affair...the kids knew enough not to try to fight within Tigers..."

Informant ADM gives his perception of the circumstances surrounding the shooting that occurred a block away from Tigers High, during lunch time, after the school was successful in preventing it from happening in the building.

"...Our circumstance was because of a neighborhood argument and all of our violence is connected to neighborhood arguments. Things that happen on the outside and brought into the school...There are

occasional fights, but all of our major violent issues start on the outside."

Tigers High has the reputation of being the toughest school in the district, a reputation that is maintained with every violent or disruptive incident that occurs in the building. The shooting previously discussed happened a few weeks after a shooting that took place at another high school. The circumstance appears different, but the issues revolved around a youngster or group trying to maintain or establish status.

Tigers High had not had a gun related incident, however with the shooting at another high school taking place, the boundaries as to where and how to settle scores were expanded. Tigers High as a collective body, needed to maintain their status and thus the school setting became the forum for the actions about to happen. ADM offers his perception:

" The amazing thing about our shooting, was that we almost felt that it was caused by [Lion's High] shooting. It was connected in a sense that, well, if those kids can use guns, then we can use guns as well. It was as if we are as tough as they are and as violent as they are...if there was no [Lion's High] shooting, there would not have been a [Tigers High] shooting..."

A new challenge for the staff and administration at Tigers High has been the increasing number of reported incidents of what the informant labeled sexual harassment.

The incidents have occurred in the mild-cognitively impaired special education population basically due to immature forms of communication by the cognitively impaired which can be misconstrued as sexual harassment. ADM explains:

"...because they maintain primitive forms of communications, they tap, they touch, instead of talking and instead of verbally communicating. So, at times, some people feel they've been harassed sexually..."

The incidents have not escalated to sexual assaults and the district's standard operating procedure regarding such incidents has always been followed.

Tigers High also has a number of posses, gangs and crews; none are officially recognized by the staff or administration. Informant ADM explains:

"We like to refer to them as neighborhood organizations because we don't want to recognize the fact that they are gangs because we feel that that is the wrong approach. So the students here have neighborhood groups. From time to time, they do hook up in the hallways and they do commit several disruptions and disturbances throughout the building."

Setting fire to school property was described by the informant as an occasional setting of fire to a garbage can in the boys' bathroom or lighting the cord of a window shade. ADM explains:

"Yesterday, two of the members of one of these groups took out lighters in the science class and appeared to be playing with lighters....at the change of block,

there was a burning smell, so we had to identify those students and we had to find those students, ask them what they set on fire as simultaneously doing a search of the areas that they where in and we discovered that they had set the cord for a shade on fire and it was slowly burning..."

Students leaving the classroom with, or without permission occurs when the student cannot or chooses not to deal with the classroom instruction. Walking out of the class offers an opportunity to meet other students in the hallways, circulate the building and get other students out of their classes. Informant ADM:

"...They are usually disruptive...they can meet in places to just congregate...from time to time, they do become assaultive...but mostly they just basically walk around the building and that's confined to a number of five to ten kids at times; perhaps on bad days a higher number, but that's the basic behavior of not reporting to class and being disruptive in the hallways." Teacher absence and the use of substitutes to fill

vacant positions is a catalyst for students walking the hallways. Informant ADM explains:

"...the kids know each other from the outside, could be in the same crew, posse or gang, and, they just find themselves here at Tigers High School, so when there is a substitute in the classroom you find a kid walking out of class and meeting other students who know the schedule of other kids, and walk by and meet the other kids in their classrooms. Those kids in turn walk out of class and before you know it, you basically have their intact street group, working within Tigers High School. So, it's a little hard to defuse all of that, when you are talking about the numbers and you are talking about the connection to teacher absentee rate. This is a big building, when you have ten teachers out, it's chaos,

when you have more than ten teachers out, it's almost uncontrollable."

The interventions.

For each of the behaviors found at Tigers High interventions have been created in an effort to reduce the number of incidents and to eventually eradicate the behaviors. For the immature behaviors of the cognitive impaired at the high school, agencies have been asked to come in and address the issue of appropriate touch. A late room and in-school suspension was created as this research was taking place to handle the problem with lateness, absences and cutting.

To manage the disruptive and aggressive behaviors, two measures were being implemented as this research was taking place. One, was the transfer of about 50 students to an off site program, the Carpe Diem Institute, where the students would receive intensive counseling and an opportunity to change negative behaviors. The informant estimated that about three quarters of the students sent to the Carpe Diem Institute were from the special education department and the remainder students were from the regular education program. The program at the Carpe Diem Institute was being implemented as the researcher was concluding the interviews. Informant ADM discusses the essence of the

Carpe Diem Institute:

"The students are expected to stay there for the duration of the school year. They have promised the students that if they respond the right way, that what they will do is come back to Tigers as true sophomores at the beginning of next year."

The second initiative was to utilize the school district's open enrollment policy to transfer 45 special education students to three of the school district's other high schools. Each of the high schools received 15 students. The decision to focus on the special education population was to offer relief to Tigers High given its disproportionate number of special education students.

Although the creation of the Carpe Diem Institute was a welcomed relief, informant ADM expressed some frustration regarding the staffing for the institute and the lack of recognition by the central office special education department that Tigers has serious behavior problems.

"...it's not truly understood that Tigers has too many behavior problems...so the odd thing that they [central office special education department] are doing...because they are taking the kids out of Tigers, they are also taking services out of Tigers ...the school nurse three days a week ...a guidance counselor throughout the week...a reading specialist ...our building still depends on those services..."

Whereas it is true that some of the more dysfunctional students are being removed from the building, the complex nature of the remaining student body requires the support

of the staff being reassigned to the Carpe Diem Institute.

This appears to be an excellent and unique opportunity for Tigers High to make positive changes that will benefit the overall functioning of the building, but most of all it offers the student body a chance to benefit from the academic initiatives at Tigers High. Informant ADM:

"You know, Tigers is always functioning from behind. It's always trying to keep up. Now we have an opportunity to make some progress with less kids and more staff, now we're getting put in the hole again."

Conflict resolution to prevent and resolve issues between groups and within groups is for the most part successful at Tigers high. Information filters from the community to the ears of school staff allowing the school staff to plan appropriate interventions in an effort to prevent more serious and violent acts. The information could come from a student who discusses the event with a security guard or any other member of the faculty. Informant ADM provides his perception on the success of behavior interventions at Tigers High:

"We're very good at mediating problems..we successfully mediated and brought them together and clarified their issues...at one point we brought in all the groups into the auditorium and spoke to them about what they needed to do in school."

The event could be a conflict that originated at a party during the weekend. The staff at Tigers High is

experienced and diligent in controlling volatile situations. Informant ADM explains:

"...once we see bodies moving we're all over the place and we manage to really divert them and redirect them and to get them into the auditorium and to start the mediation."

Settling the score.

Because most of the actors are found in the school, and because it is more difficult to hide in school, Tigers High becomes the setting in which to settle the conflict. For the students, the school becomes an extension of the neighborhood and the rules regarding safety and proper behavior are quickly overlooked. The boundaries that separate the streets from the academic environment become invisible to the students. Informant ADM expresses his perception:

"...they don't understand that once they come through the doors it's safety and security for everyone. It's just a continuation of the neighborhood battle..."

Students mobilize in school in a fairly quick manner. By knowing each other's schedules, students walk out of class reaching their friends to organize and prepare for an attack or to simply prove a source of power. Informant ADM explains:

"...it's amazing, when there is a gang related problem here, these kids can mobilize and go deep very quickly. They just happen to know where everybody

is...[they]just go around the building until they got what they need."

Finding out about a score to be settled does not often happen as early as the staff would prefer, but it does happen in time for interventions to take place. The measures utilized by the staff include: identifying the parties involved, encouraging them to sit and talk about their issues, coming back to the table the next day. If parents are involved, the parents are also invited. Those involved sit in the auditorium in separate groups to listen to a non-violent solution which encourages them to think first before taking physical action. The students react favorably, at least while they are in the building.

Success stories.

Not all is chaos at Tigers High. Students are starting to show trust and confidence in the relatively new administrative team. It shows in their resolve to succeed and move forth with their dreams and in the students' ability to rise to an opportunity, to show improvement.

The informant reported that a student passing by the site of the shooting down the street from the high school, at lunch time, was an accidental victim who was shot in the foot. That student kept his commitment to take the SAT the next day. A discouraged behavior disorder student who

displayed disruptive and aggressive behaviors was changed from a special education class to an inclusion program for a successful outcome. Informant ADM summarizes:

"I said to myself this is a bright kid, and I changed, and I put her in in-class support classes and she's doing fine...There are other kids that have been traditionally hard to reach that we're starting to reach."

Re-building Tigers' pride.

One of the goals of the administrative team is to bring back Tigers' Pride. The ways in which this is being achieved is by rebuilding the learning community by bringing back programs, rebuilding the campus environment, placing benches around the small opened area where the students may have lunch, replacing landscaping, maintaining the message board to provide the community with correct information pertaining to Tigers High's achievements, classroom contests depicting Tigers paraphernalia. New trophy cases have been ordered and names of honor students and achievement students as well as student of the month are being posted.

Tigers High is the magnet school for the multimedia program as well as business and marketing. The multi-media program is well known around the city. It is a state of the art recording studio. The students produce a ten minute television program each morning with the morning

announcements. The program helps channel the student's creativity in music, film and production. The pride in his students comes across in his voice when informant ADM states:

"..there's some talented kids coming through Tigers High School."

The business programs offer the students the opportunity to work in many different types of office settings including, accounting firms, insurance offices, even central office.

An area that's lacking is the creation of programs that may motivate and encourage the disruptive student to change their ways. Those programs tend to cost more money and are more complex to design. Informant ADM ponders:

"...The kids that are creating groups and walking around the building from time to time, I don't think are in those programs...their needs need to be addressed as well. For some reason administrators find it easier to address the needs of the brighter kids, you know, and they don't really take the time, money, and efforts to plan for kids that, you know have some behavior difficulties."

The future of Tigers High.

By the end of the interviews, noticeable changes had impacted the daily function of the building. The traffic in the hallways had diminished considerably and there was quiet in the hallways. Teachers noticed the difference

where as before teachers would use the elevator to go up one flight of stairs for fear of being assaulted or intimidated. Informant ADM:

"..most teachers wore out their elevator's key because they didn't want to be in the stairways.."

The decision to transfer some students appeared to have made a difference in the school climate at Tigers High, at least for the time being.

The School-Based Youth Service Program at Tigers high provides counseling and support to parents. The program is available to students even throughout the summer months.

Administratively, the school district is in partnership with the City University the leading agency managing the grant to improve and accelerate teacher training, especially for those teachers of the handicapped who hold temporary certificates. This includes free tuition for the required courses. There is also a section of the grant that addresses the transition of students from high school to the work place. This grant was recently enforced providing needed services to the students and staff of Tigers High.

Zero tolerance program.

The interviews with SW revealed that at Zero Tolerance, the student's experience is somewhat different

than what they experienced in their neighborhood school. The Zero Tolerance Program has two sites. One site is for those students K through fourth grade and the other site is for students in the fifth through twelve grades. The Zero Tolerance site that is the focus in this study is the latter one. The Zero Tolerance Program for grades fifth through twelve is housed at the Boys and Girls Club in the downtown area of The City. The school district rents a few rooms in the Boys and Girls Club building for this purpose.

The Zero Tolerance Program has two school social workers a security guard, two teachers and two teacher assistants. The students are expected to come in at 8:30am and leave at 3:00pm. Bus tickets are provided for those students who reside more than two miles away from the program. Otherwise the students are expected to get there on their own means of transportation. The usual stay at Zero Tolerance is a total of ten days, however, some students stay for less, whereas, others stay longer. The purpose of the Zero Tolerance Program is to deter further acting out behavior. It is purposely designed to temporarily remove students from their neighborhood schools, away from their friends and familiar surroundings. SW explains:

"...It's meant to be a deterrent that you're taken out of your home school and it can be kind of a hardship, you know some students, if you're not more than two miles from here, you're not given bus tickets so they have to get here on their own and it's difficult, and then you have a lot of parents that are upset over it, but we try to explain to the parents that this is meant to be a deterrent so that in the future maybe your child will not act in the manner they did to get 'em here."

The students are grouped by their academic status, i.e., one class for those students in grammar school and a class for those students in the high school. The students come to the program with their assignments, to be completed before they return to their neighborhood school.

The types of offenses for which a student is referred to Zero Tolerance include students who have assaulted teachers, assaulted other students, robbed teachers, or have brought weapons to school. The kind of student who is referred to Zero Tolerance is usually fourteen to fifteen years old, male, a special education student, demonstrates uncooperative school behavior, has little or no hope for the future and has been involved with the Juvenile Justice System. SW reports:

"We have students who have spent time in the Youth House....probably(age) fourteen, fifteen, special ed...that come here, we have students that have assaulted a teacher and have robbed teachers, that have assaulted other students. We have students that bring weapons. We've had students that, I remember one students last year that, he had a fight with a student that almost lost his eye. So I mean it varies, with what their offenses are. Again we

don't decide who comes here, it is the Superintendent's Office."

When the student commits a serious offense against a teacher or another student, the principal reports the offense to the Superintendent's office. Following the Standard Operating Procedure established for Zero Tolerance, staff in the superintendent's office decides if the student is appropriate for Zero Tolerance and determines the length of time the student will be expected to attend Zero Tolerance. This process usually takes two to three days.

Once the process is completed the parent is notified and given a date to bring the student to Zero Tolerance. In other words the student is suspended at home for those two to three days and then is expected to complete the seven to ten days at Zero Tolerance. When the student arrives at Zero Tolerance for the first time, the student meets a program social worker to discuss the reasons why Zero Tolerance was selected for the student. Upon completion of the determined days, the student is returned to the neighborhood school.

Juveniles' view of school.

The juveniles viewed school as a social setting. It was the place where they spent time with their friends and

settled scores. How they viewed their teacher became their reason for attending or cutting class, i.e., if the juveniles disliked their teacher, that class became the one they would most likely cut. These juveniles did not respond well to authority figures and thus became defiant with teachers and other school staff.

The juveniles' perception of an "OK" teacher was connected to the teacher's ability to reach that juvenile, not on an academic level, but on an interpersonal level. After identifying one staff member who was viewed as the one who helped him the most while he was in school, informant V explained:

"She kept everything real. Like she talk to you like you on the street, she kept everything real. I talk the same way she talk...She ain't put up a front, she ain't try ta lie, She jist kept it straight up..the rest of them lie, gonna do this, gonna do that, but they lying.."

The juveniles perceived the classroom as a possession of the teacher, making the interpersonal relationship between the juveniles and the teacher a powerful teaching tool. It made the difference between attendance or cutting. Informant V on his perception as to why he was not successful in school:

"The teachers...If I ain't like you, I ain't gonna talk to you or notin, like the teachers, I ain't like them, I ain't going back to school. That, their class!.."

Informant W expressed his reasons for class attendance in this manner:

"...if I enjoy going to that class, then yeah, I'll pay attention, but if I ain' like the teacher, I wouldn't do nottin'."

Informant SW in her role as a school social worker attempted to help the students in the Zero Tolerance Program process their interpersonal relationship with their teachers by pointing out to the student that the teacher is the means by which they will eventually attain their goal. This process is developed in the Zero Tolerance Program, however it was not clear if it continued once the student was returned to their neighborhood school.

When asked if in her views the student's perception of their teacher was accurate or was in fact the teacher's attitude toward the student triggering a reaction in the student, SW responded in the following manner:

"...I can't identify exactly what goes on in the classrooms, but this is not a perfect world as we know, and if a student has a reputation of causing trouble, then the teacher may single that student out more than is necessary, but that's life. I explain...the teacher has work that they must do. They must teach..."

On the other side of the coin, we find that the teachers are under a great deal of stress to perform and to improve tests scores. Tests scores in this school district are under the expected state standard for passing and the

teachers are undoubtedly under tremendous pressure. SW explains:

"...if someone is disruptive, not only is the teacher not getting to do what they need to do, the class isn't getting to what they need to get, so the teacher is accountable as well as the students are accountable by their tests...if she's still doing decimals for three weeks, she's gonna be asked why. So it's kind of like a vicious cycle. If you're disruptive the teacher gets annoyed, the class then becomes out of control."

Feelings of boredom also played a role in shaping the juveniles' interest in school. Lack of interest appeared as a main factor determining school attendance. However, these juveniles because of their aggressive behavior, lack of attendance and poor academic standing were unable to compete for the more interesting magnet programs found in this school district. The presentation of traditional curriculum did not capture these juveniles' attention. Informant M relates his experience in a history class.

"...its boring and I'm passing and I'm not even learning nothing..I don't do no work for her, you know, 'cause she, I don't like her...I sleep in that class."

The juveniles were also unable to grasp the concept of what constitutes an absence. The juveniles saw nothing wrong about being late multiple times, sometimes as late as half an hour, or cutting more than one class. If they attended some classes and not others, their perception was that they were not absent.

Regardless of their attitude in school, academic standing or criminal record, all the juveniles interviewed expressed a desire to obtain their high school diploma or GED. Planning how to obtain their diploma or GED became another story. The juveniles, at least at the time of the interviews, lacked the discipline necessary to complete the program. There were other situations that prevented them from following through such as re-involvement with the legal system and spending time in lock-up.

School behavior.

The juveniles self-identified various types of school behavior from the time they were in elementary school through high school. School behavior ran the gamut. Behaviors, as described by the juveniles included disrupting class, fighting with other students, bullying, cursing at teachers and other school staff, smoking cigarettes in the bathroom, taking other kids' lunch money. When asked if he remembered how many times he was suspended in one year and why, informant V responded:

"Three times from school. I got suspended like five days, come back for two days and get suspended again...[for] bothering other people, bullying people."

The juveniles' defiant attitude, since a young age, made it difficult for them to relate appropriately to teachers and other staff in a position of authority. All

the juveniles reported being in trouble in school from an early age, resulting in out of school suspensions and in some occasions, transfers to other schools.

For these juveniles the negative school behavior was not just an individual reaction to a situation, but it was a way to gain or maintain status with their peers.

Informant M: "I use to be with friends and use to do what they do, you know, follow their steps and use to do everything they tell me, you know...I use to want to be like them, cause I use to not be cool, so I was like, I'm gonna try to be cool, you know...they was cracking on me, so I started, you know doing things they were doing and then they was like, you alright, you alright now, you cool with us"

Informant W: "... 'cause I used to hang with the crowd. I used to be part of the crowd. So, it's like, whatever the crowd done, I would do too, 'cause I was part of the crowd. Like if you look at me wrong, if you like rolled your eyes at me, I'd come up to you, Whatchu rolling your eyes at? If I didn't like your answer, I'll punch you, I'll hit you."

School fights were seen as a necessary incident in order to prevent future confrontations and thus help maintain their status. It involved bullying others as well as sending the message that they would only fight if confronted. Informant W stated:

"when I was young I was picked on"

Once in high school, he developed his own strategy to prevent being "picked on". With the sense that school officials or the police were unable to offer protection,

informant W perceived survival in high school in the following manner:

"...so what I have to do in order for nobody to pick on me, I have to make a little name for myself; let people know what I was about. I don't bother you if you don't bother me, but if you bother me, we gonna fight."

The issue of respect played a big role in how the juveniles responded to their teachers. Therefore teacher attitude towards the juvenile became basis for the juvenile's attitude toward school. Informant V stated:

"Certain teachers I ain't like them. They ain't like my attitude so, I ain't like them. I ain't like they attitudes, I ain't like the way they talk to me"

Informant W: "... 'cause there was this one teacher, she ain't even know me, when I first came she said that she thought I was a short, ugly black kid. That piss me off right there, so, I said the hell wid her."

Weapons in school.

Students who bring in any type of firearms to school are suspended and placed on home instruction pending an expulsion hearing in accordance with NJPL 127-128. In addition, criminal charges may also be filed against the student for possession of a firearm. Any student who aims a weapon other than a firearm at any school staff may also be suspended.

There are many other circumstances when student are found in possession of other types of weapons. The types

of weapons include ROTC practice weapons, plastic guns, razor blades, box cutters and any other item utilized in a fight or to intimidate another student or staff.

The circumstances for bearing weapons varied from the show and tell among friends of a first grader who brings to school a water gun to the poor judgment of a high school student who brought to school his ROTC practice weapon.

Informant SW explains:

"...somebody had a water pistol. Now it was a water pistol, they didn't even take out of their backpack, but it fell out of the backpack, and it was misconstrued as if it could be a weapon, so they are sent to Zero Tolerance."

The school district's standard operating procedure regarding weapons in school is enforced without discretion, treating all students in the same manner. The incident with the first grader involved a water gun that was not taken out of his backpack, but it fell out. The incident with the ROTC student involved an ROTC practice weapon, in its case, in plain view in the student's locker. The student in question did not want to walk back home after school to pick up his practice weapon. Informant SW explains:

"...although you may say that there is a difference, somebody with a water pistol and somebody bringing in a knife, knowingly that they're going to hurt somebody or someone can get hurt, you know, it's different, but the policy remains the same..."

Many of the students found with box cutters have forgotten they have it with them. For some students the need to protect themselves may stem from the school or police inability to provide protection from frequent assaults. Informant SW offers her perception:

SW: "...they come from these rough neighborhoods and that's [the weapon] what they need to survive. We have a student right now who's in Zero Tolerance because he brought a knife to school because he was being jumped and he wanted it for when he left school, he didn't intend to use it in school..."

Display of anger in school - A social worker's view.

Violence is a community problem that is brought to school by children who may have been exposed to it by their parents and/or by the areas in which they reside (Roth, 1998). SW described the case of an eleven-year-old grammar school boy with low academic levels who was sent to Zero Tolerance for 10 days. He was eligible to receive special education services as emotionally disturbed under the Individuals with Disability Educational Act (IDEA). Therefore in accordance with the mandates of IDEA a Manifestation Determination meeting was held with the parent, the teacher and case manager, to determine if the student's acting out aggressive behavior was a reflection of the disability. The parent was described as frustrated and uncooperative with school staff. Informant SW:

"...He went after a boy in the school and beat the boy up and then the principal, he was put in the library and he knocked the glass through the library door and then he tried to attack the principal.... I suggested that she [mother] come in and talk and may be we'll try and figure out how we can help her, help him, but she refused. She said I have to be some place and I don't have time to waste here, I don't care what happens to my son, I want the State to take him and she told me that in front of the child.....I suspect that his home life is quite difficult in the manner in which she deals with him. I mean telling him that she didn't want him, and she hopes the State takes him, certainly isn't going to help matters any."

Counseling is provided as part of the services available at Zero Tolerance. Counseling sessions with the eleven year old previously described revealed an extremely angry little boy. His anger was displayed in explosive behaviors aimed at others, students and staff alike. He perceived himself as a "mower" who "was going to mow everyone down". His reason for assaulting the other student was because the other boy hit his sister. Although, he is only eleven the sense of protecting a family member regardless of the setting or the consequences appeared to be of extreme importance to him.

The social worker presented the case of a thirteen year old girl who was at Zero Tolerance because she kicked the principal and the security guard. While at Zero Tolerance, she was caught gambling at lunch time. Her reaction when the cards were taken away from her was to

walk out of the Zero Tolerance site. When SW notified the mother that the student had left the Zero Tolerance site, SW was informed that this particular youngster had also assaulted her mother and grandmother.

SW: "...here was a student that was out all night, didn't have curfews, the mother had a boyfriend living there that was also selling drugs so, you know ... the girl steals, the child does drugs and is sexually active."

This family was involved with the state's agency for the protection of children, however, when the parent was confronted with this latest crisis concerning her daughter, the mother expected the school district to provide relief. Informant SW:

"...and her mother wanted to know what I was gonna do, what I was gonna do for her now, that she wanted her to go to boot camp and I said that's an issue you'll have to take up to the courts..."

The triggers.

The triggers for the display of anger in the school setting include a parent's negative comments about the student's behavior, a reaction to being bullied, a reaction to being teased, a reaction to a teacher's comment the student did not like, to defend a family member, frustration from an inability to read and poor academic skills, short attention span, dysfunctional family situation, disrespect from peers, perceived dirty looks

from others, perceived being talked about by others.

Informant SW on academic difficulties:

"He is very angry, he can't read, he doesn't want people to know that, but he can't, he can't identify the letters of the alphabet, so he's an eleven year old boy that's very behind, very frustrated and he's very angry. Typically, he'll take his anger out, he doesn't know how to manage his anger."

Informant SW on behavioral display:

"...Whether they reacted to someone bullying them, whether they reacted to a teacher that they didn't like, whether they reacted to a student teasing them. You know depending upon the scenario, we try to offer other solutions, because obviously the solution they chose put them in this situation."

At Tigers High, besides the student's academic difficulties there may also be a teacher's lack of awareness for the student's learning style in addition to the controversial 80 minute block for academic classes.

Informant ADM addresses it in this manner:

"...the 80 minute block can be a trigger, because that's a long time for some kids, and if teachers aren't addressing the multi-sensory needs of a student, that can be a trigger in itself. The student wants to escape, either because they are bored, they can't handle the instruction, they're frustrated..."

Retooling.

While at Zero Tolerance, the students participate in counseling, individual and or group counseling. The counseling sessions are aimed at helping the students identify their behaviors, explore choices available to them

and consider the consequences of their choice. The students respond well to the counseling at Zero Tolerance. Most students welcome the opportunity to discuss events in their lives. SW explains:

"...most of them like to talk, because in reality they have no one else to talk to, no one really talks to them and asks them, how do you feel"

However, establishing rapport is not always easily achieved and at times is not achieved at all during the student's stay at Zero Tolerance. Some students do not want to open up; in that case, the student is encouraged to participate but not forced. SW on establishing rapport:

"...probably one of the worse cases I had with a girl, she dotted a teacher's face with a pencil, and she told the teacher that next time it would be a knife. This was a girl who was in and out of the youth house, came from Duncan Projects, was in a shelter...her mother was in jail, for selling drugs...I just said let's get the ground rules, and little by little, I called her my little orange... outside looks tough...but on the inside it's nice and sweet and that was really what she was like...I hear she is back into a shelter again, she is out of school."

The students are made aware that problem solving behavior is learned. Informant SW:

"You know you are learning this at home 'cause if people around you react in a certain way, you're gonna learn to react in this way. So we try to retool you and say, look, you don't want to act that way cause, why, that's what's getting you into trouble."

The students are encouraged to check their pockets and backpacks before they leave home to make sure that they are not bringing to school any prohibited items. Students who exhibit more acting out behavior while at Zero Tolerance are taken for a brief walk around the building, are offered puzzles or are given the opportunity to work alone.

It was unclear what type of continuity of counseling is available to the students in Zero Tolerance upon their return from Zero Tolerance to their neighborhood school.

Parental cooperation.

Parental cooperation concerning the at-risk student continues to be an area that requires improvement. The school informants perceived that some parents of at-risk students often lacked awareness concerning their child's school behavior. The informant discusses the case of a young child who pushed and kicked a teacher resulting in a referral to Zero Tolerance. Informant SW explains:

"...I had a grandmother come and this student assaulted a teacher and they lived in Greenville, so it was difficult, and the grandmother just kept saying, this is wrong, he shouldn't be here...I just don't have any way of getting him here..Now I mean, to punish them to come here to go to school here for seven days, for assaulting a teacher doesn't seem that severe."

The parents have the right to appeal the decision to attend Zero Tolerance and in the aforementioned instance

the decision was modified. Informant SW gives her perception:

"The length of stay was shortened. She went to the Superintendent's Office. But my whole thing with the grandmother was she wasn't getting the idea that the student assaulted a teacher, kicked and punched a teacher."

According to the informant, some parents of students experiencing behavior difficulties are frustrated about their child's school behavior. The manifestation of that frustration is not always in a manner in the best interest of the child. Informant SW explains:

"...typically we look at some parents that are involved and we get others that we can't reach...we had an incident here last week with two students...we told the student that the next day he had to come back with a parent. Well, he didn't come back the next day. The parent came just Tuesday and told me she didn't care what happened to him...He's eleven, he was on Home Instruction, he was placed out of district. Now he is back in the district because the mother did not want him to go as far as he went...now the mother is washing her hands of him. She doesn't want to be bothered and we couldn't reach her. She gave us a work number that she doesn't work where she says she works."

What makes zero tolerance work.

Although the staff at Zero Tolerance is isolated from the rest of the teaching community in that it is situated in a non-school district building, the staff appears pleased with their assignment. Zero Tolerance is made up of a few rooms which are rented from the Boys and Girls Club

where the students must be escorted to the bathroom and the staff does not have a separate bathroom or a teacher's room. Informant SW:

"We have to escort the students to the bathroom, because this building is shared by the Charter School, by preschool, so I mean, and it's a big building where they could disappear in. So we escort them to the restroom, we escort them to the gym and wherever else they have to go."

There is no administrator on site and the chain of command is not a clear route. SW's perception is that the Zero Tolerance staff responds to two supervisors, executive administrator, an associate superintendent and ultimately to the school superintendent. In the neighborhood school, when a staff member is absent, one call is made to the school secretary to report said absence; however, at Zero Tolerance various calls are made. When a Zero Tolerance staff calls in absent, the person not only calls Central office, but, if it is a teacher, the teacher calls the teacher assistant or visa versa as well as the head teacher. In the case of the social workers, they also call each other so that proper coverage is provided. Informant SW explains:

"In the regular school all you have to do is call the secretary and tell them you're gonna be out. I mean,...if you have a relationship with your other colleagues...it's just responsible behavior to let them know, if you can...we call early in the morning,

I'll call -----at six or six thirty in the morning and let her know that I'm sick and I'm not gonna be in."

In spite of these inconveniences the staff at Zero Tolerance exhibits excellent attendance, an extraordinary disposition to work with the students referred to the program, as well as with each other. On most occasions, the students are provided with one on one instruction from the teachers or the teacher assistants. There is also cooperation among the elementary classroom teacher and the high school classroom teacher in the event that a student may need to be switched from one class to the other because of difficulties. The two social workers in the program are aware of their different personalities and style in working with the students. They are flexible with their caseloads in the event that a student may benefit from a change in social worker. Team work is readily visible from the security guard to the head teacher. SW explains:

"It's a team...if somebody has to go to lunch...we're all there for each other. It's not like, Oh, Oh, this is my time, you know, so it works... you have to be flexible, you have to be responsible, you have to be willing to pitch in when it's not your job. No one here says well it's not my job....whatever it takes we do."

The leadership style of the associate superintendent of schools assigned to Zero Tolerance demonstrates flexibility and trust in the abilities of the staff at Zero

Tolerance. The staff feels treated as a professional body able to handle the many difficult situations that arise on a frequent basis. Informant SW:

"...we are responsible and we handle most situations. The administrators don't want to hear from us. They have their jobs, we have our jobs...The administrators treat us like professionals that we can get it done."

This is a staff that is not micromanaged but is supported when the need arises. SW explains her perception of the associate superintendent's leadership style:

"...if I said it was an emergency, she would be here in a flash...she has enough confidence in what we do. It's kind of, it's very refreshing, it's very professional. If for some reason you can't, she's there to back you up. She's always there to backup your judgment. She doesn't second guess you and so far it's worked."

The kind of staff found at Zero Tolerance is someone who is flexible with their time, able to work as a team, willing to go beyond their job description, experienced in working with difficult students, insightful with the students and not too confrontational with the students. SW explains:

"...in order for this program to work you have to be pretty well keyed and you can not be surprised at certain behaviors. If everyone is shocked and outraged at this behavior, this isn't the place to be..."

Early intervention.

Students are referred to the Zero Tolerance Program as early as Kindergarten with referral peaking in the ninth

grade with a steady decline after that. The data indicate that the school district has many programs available to the school age population starting with age three. Breakfast, lunch and after-school programs are available, as well as Super Saturdays when some schools are open offering educational activities, such as chess or technology classes. The schools have an in-school suspension program, counseling services, and the four main high schools have school-based clinics that provide counseling free of charge. One high school has a state funded School-Based Youth Services Program. The school based clinics as well as the School-Based Youth Services Program are run in partnership with three different community mental health clinics. Although the services are available to the community not all children with school related behavior difficulties agree to participate. Informant SW explains:

"...Every high school has these school-based clinics that counseling services are available. If they feel that they need to go outside the school, there is programs, like The City Medical Center, there's Christ Hospital; so they're all in place. They have after school therapeutic programs, one-on-one counseling. But a lot of these students refuse to go."

The school district also has service brokers that assist needy families navigate the social service world.

Interpretation: School and school related violence.

The perception of the informants describes the frustrations experienced by parents, students and staff trying to navigate the school setting. The informants described fights, fire setting to school property, disruptive classroom behavior, yelling, cursing and weapons possession as events that occur in the school setting. The researcher chooses to group the violent events into three categories based on the data on Table 2.

One, moderate violent incidents was applied to incidents that do not involve the police or a referral to the Zero Tolerance Program and are thus handled with an in-school suspension or with brief out of school suspensions. Moderate violent incidents are disrupting class, walking out of class, cursing and yelling.

Two, serious violent events were incidents involving fights, weapons not including firearms and the use of weapons while fighting. Serious violent events may involve the police, a stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center or a referral to the Zero Tolerance Program.

Three, severe violent events may involve situations such as assaults on staff, bringing firearms to school, setting fire to school property and making terroristic threats against the staff. Severe violent events may

involve the police, a referral to the Zero Tolerance Program and a stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center.

Consistent with the findings by Dr. Elijah Anderson (1999) in his work with Philadelphia youth is the need to protect the self in the absence of official protection, i.e., the perceived lack of protection from authorities. Dr. Anderson argues that the lack of protection from authorities forces the youth to develop their own code, "the code of the streets." In the case of these informants, the perception that school officials are unable to protect them stimulates the urgency to self-protect using any means necessary. The informants achieved this by carrying different types of weapons and developing an attitude to fight if they felt challenged or disrespected.

Second to self protection is the need to establish or maintain status which was not only an individual need but a collective need as well. The instrument to achieve this was the fight. Fights were seen as necessary events to prevent future confrontations and thus help establish or maintain their status. Clearly stated by one of the informants "I have to make a little name for myself; let people know what I was about".

The school setting in this study seen as a collective body also has a need to maintain its reputation. The

reputation is maintained with every violent or disruptive incident that occurs in the building. A few weeks after a school related shooting took place at another high school, Tigers High developed its own gun related incident which took place at lunch time and a block away from the school. Although, school officials were able to defuse the incident and prevent it from occurring within the High School, the fact that there were Tigers High School students involved provided Tigers High with a gun related incident and an opportunity to maintain their status as a tough school. The administrator informant offers his perception:

"...it was as if we are as tough as they are and as violent as they are...if there was no [Lions High] shooting, there would not had been a [Tigers High] shooting..."

The informants' perception is that the more serious confrontations among students are as a result of events that have taken place in the community, in the student's neighborhood. These unsettled events are brought to school where they are attempted to be resolved. This is also shared by the administrative informant who perceives that much of the violent incidents that occur in Tigers High are simply unsettled neighborhood incidents "...all of our violence is connected to neighborhood arguments....there are occasional fights, but all of our major violent issues

start on the outside."

In addition to the unresolved conflicts that some students bring to Tigers High is the need to improve the school climate. Whereas it is true that the frequent disruptive and sometimes violent events by some students contribute to the poor school climate, other facts such as high teacher absenteeism, frequent use of substitute teachers, large number of special education teachers with temporary certifications are perceived by the administrative informant as contributing points to the poor school climate at Tigers High.

Informant's Family Context

Family life issues became a clear common concept in all of the interviews with the juvenile informants as well as with the school district staff. Each of the juvenile informants appeared to have a different family background at first sight, however upon close analysis of the data the common elements began to emerge.

Taxonomy of the juvenile informants.

The juvenile informants that participated in this study were adult male recidivists who had experienced a stay in the County Juvenile Detention Center on various occasions. All of the juvenile informants had experienced behavioral difficulties when they were in school as well as

having minimum contact with their fathers. At the time the study was being conducted one juvenile informant appeared as he may be in able to graduate high school in June. He was also the only employed as a teenager. Most of the informants had difficulties with substance abuse.

Table 3 provides a taxonomy of the juvenile informants' characteristics at the time the study was being conducted.

Table 3

Taxonomy of the Juvenile Informants Characteristics

Informant Characteristics	Informant A	Informant W	Informant M	Informant V
Recidivist	X	X	X	X
Spent Time in the Juvenile Detention Center	X	X	X	X
Completing High School			X	
Behavior Difficulties in School and at Home	X	X	X	X
Lived with Other Than Mother	X			
Known to Social Service Agency	X	X	X	
Substance Abuse	X	X	X	X
Employed as a Minor			X	
Employed as an Adult		X	X	X
Limited Contact With Father	X	X	X	X

Relationship with father.

Important to these male juvenile informants was the role of the father. A positive relationship with their father at an early age surged with bitterness, but at the

same time with a certain sense of longing for the father-son relationship missing in their lives. Informant V explains:

"...I used to see kids with their fathers, I used to asked my mother where my father at, and she say I don't know. Like in school, what ever, go out for a family game, I used to miss my father, but it's al'right."

The father was absent in the lives of the juvenile informants due to the break up with their mother; however, all fathers maintained at least minimum contact with their sons. Informant W stated how he perceived his father:

"I kinda had in mind that they didn't give shits about me, ya know what I'm saying...when I wanted to do father and son stuff, he ain' wanna do it...he wouldn' do nuttin', no father and son stuff".

Contact with the father, if established, involved issues of money, either the father needed money or the juvenile needed money. Informants A and V stated it clearly:

Informant A: "I try to stay away from him...cause every time he see me he ask me for money... he don't never have money".

Informant V: "We talk, we don't' even sit down to discuss things, see how I'm doing. He give me money and I always take it."

The perception regarding the absent father was also captured by SW who provides the counseling for children at the Zero Tolerance Program. Referring to an eleven year old

sent to Zero Tolerance by the neighborhood school, after he assaulted the principal and a teacher, she stated.

Informant SW:

"He's just angry, very, very angry. I asked him about his father. He hasn't seen his father since he was born. He did tell me he saw his father last week at church and his father was going to take him overnight. And then I asked him after the weekend, had he seen his father, and he said NO!"

One of the informants explains lack of contact with his father when he was age eleven and offers his perception. Frustration is also apparent in his statement.

Informant W:

"Problems started around age eleven...I wanted to spend time wit my father. I understand that he's a busy person, but it seem like he never took time wit me. That's why there was always a conflict between us."

The informant also perceived that curfew and discipline were not consistently enforced by his single mother as would his father. Informant W:

"I can basically do whatever I want. I can stay out as late as I want. I don't have to worry about parents breathing down my back 'cause I come home late...my pop's not home, that's much better...I get along better when he is not around, than as opposed to if he was living in the same house... I wouldn't have as much freedom as I have today..."

Father's jail time, alcohol and drug abuse were also at the heart of the father-son relationship from the perspectives of both the juvenile informants and school staff. SW cited the case of an elementary school age girl

who was sent to Zero Tolerance for pushing the security guard, being in areas she wasn't supposed to be in, cursing and walking out of the building:

"It's day to day survival. There is a lot of poverty..., a lot of drugs, a lot of drugs, a lot of alcohol...her father came to school to get her, but he was drunk, and then she went after him to find him and she was running all over the school, and the principal asked her what she was doing and she was very agitated, obviously because her father was there and he was drunk."

Relationship with mother.

For informant A the experiences with his mom were limited by his memory. His mother died when he was about eight or nine years old. He remembers living with his mother until age six and then moving to live with his paternal grandmother for reasons he didn't know. The informant explains. Informant A:

"I use to stay wit my mother 'till I was six and then I lived wit my grandmother..my mother, my father and my grandmother all use to live in the same house...then my mother moved out...I think I was going to visit her mostly everyday or something and I just stayed with my grandmother. It was so far, so long ago I don't' even remember."

Informant A has three brothers all of whom went to live with a different aunt after his grandmother died. The informant explains:

"No, not with the same one (aunt)that I'm wit. He's with my mother's sister, I wit my father's sister..My other brother, he's in the youth house. He wit my other father's sister. There's two different aunts but

they still my father's sister."

His family background also demonstrates the types of guardians, besides the mother and the father who may be involved in the lives of these juveniles. Grandparents, aunts, uncle, foster parents and godmothers emerged as those who in the role of guardian, act as parents. Table 4 illustrates the types of guardians involved with the juvenile informants.

Table 4

Types of Guardians

Types of Guardians	Sets Discipline	Goes to Court	Provides Shelter	Provides Recreation	Has Legal Custody
Mother	X	X	X	X	X
Father	X	X	X	X	
Aunt	X	X	X	X	
Grand Mother	X	X	X	X	X
God Mother	X		X	X	

The guardian may have legal custody and be present in all aspects of the juvenile's life. The guardian may also have legal custody, provide shelter but not attend court. The guardian may not have legal custody, but provides discipline, attends court, and provides shelter. The guardian regardless of the legal status, always provides

discipline and shelter. The biological parent is not always the legal guardian.

An informant who resided with his mother who was also his legal guardian, spoke in a warm and moving manner about his mother with keen emphasis about not wanting to see his mother suffer or cry. After receiving various stab wounds in the arm, the leg and back, informant V resorted to his father for assistance and not his mother:

"I didn't wanna see her crying..I never like to see my mother sad, upset, I like to see her happy...every time I see her she got a smile on her face, that's how I wan her ta be, with a smile on her face"

The mother is usually the one who goes with them to court and is present in just about every court hearing, including the rigorous participation in the Juvenile Drug Court program. Informant W explains:

"..my mother was there for me more than my friends were, or my associates. My mother will be by me 24-7. Everything I did, any time I got in trouble, she was on my side, no matter what..."

Although conflict between the mother and the juvenile at times escalated to police involvement, when speaking about their mother, the informants had nothing but praise, warmth and affection.

The single parent home.

In the absence of the father the family was left under the care of the mother. The single parent received

support from other family members such as grandmothers and aunts. The mothers provided not only a caring environment, but were responsible for the discipline of their sons, as well as for their financial needs; almost always competing against the influence of peers in an environment where the code of the streets is the ruling force (Anderson, 1999).

These single mothers struggle with the household financial situation by being lawfully employed, receiving public assistance, receiving a combination of partial public assistance, medical assistance and employment, and borrowing from friends.

Staying out of trouble.

The juveniles perceived family outings and parents taking an interest in what their child liked as one of the ways a parent can help their child stay out of trouble.

Informant A explains:

"Take them out to do stuff that he(child) like to do...like people showing kids stuff, like, more than just the streets."

A parent spending time with their child completing a family project was an example of an activity the juvenile informant thought important. Informant A:

"...if they do that, they be teaching them what to do. So they won't really think they parent useless, they won't think that they parents really ain't teaching them noting, they want to always rely on them, so when

somebody else let them down they got their parents to rely on."

Although they agreed that once in their teen years some activities become "boring". Informant A:

"..my aunt and them used to always take me out but after awhile it got boring. As you get older you start liking different things."

However, without the prospect of a job before the age of sixteen, there is little a twelve or thirteen year old can do in a financially suppressed situation other than, "be on the street". Informant A explains:

"...you like thirteen or twelve whatever, you ain't got noting to do when it get boring, you ain't gat no job, What you gonna do stay in the house all day?"

The juveniles also acknowledged that on many occasions their acting-out behavior deterred parents and other family members or friends from taking them out again. The acting-out behaviors consisted of tantrums to manipulate the adult into buying something the juvenile wanted, running around, pushing people, making others drop their candy while at the movies, cursing at people, fighting and being disrespectful.

Boredom.

The issue of boredom for the juveniles was a recurring fact interchangeable throughout different themes. In relationship to the concept of family, prevention of

boredom was perceived by the informants as an important ingredient in helping kids stay out of trouble. In other words, not only is a parent responsible for arranging recreational, social, and religious activities for their child, but the substance of the activity, the interest level and the age of the youngster must also be considered. So that a father taking his teen-aged son to pick up his payroll check in an effort to spend time with his son was an appropriate activity at a younger age; as a teenager however, it became boring. Informant W:

"To pick up his checks, his checks!. But that got old to me. Ya know what I mean, there is noting for me to do. Ya know what I'm saying, everybody is older than me. I ain have nothing in common wid'im..."

Money also appeared as a stumbling block to the informant's activities. Parents unable to afford many of the activities that the youngsters thought as interesting or exciting such as, a ball game, camping or fishing, added another layer to the complex task of preventing boredom.

Informant A explains:

"...I been to the Boys and Girls Club before, play basketball, but you can do that at home, you can do that on the streets or whatever...you can't go on trips all the time...they ain't got the money."

Excitement was important for these informants. The juveniles expected a certain degree of excitement in order to stay involved in an activity. Sustaining the juvenile's

interest appeared to be an important factor, that is, the youngster's interest had to be stimulated to help keep him off the streets. In A's view:

"If they like doing something, they do that, instead of playing on the streets.."

Informant W described his days in the following manner:

"...my day, it be kinda boring sometime, because I don't have nothing to do, have too much time on my hands. My day sometimes drag on and on."

As the informants got older, a sense of independence settled in, whereas the level of the activity with the parent remained the same, almost pushing the juvenile to look at things that they could do alone or in the company of their peers. In their case, in the streets, as informant W stated:

"..I wasn't getting nothin' out of it, and, until I realized that I was getting older and I gotta start doing things by myself. I kinda got tired of goin' out.."

Socio-economic issues.

The families experienced financial hardships that were handled in different ways. Some families were on the welfare rolls for years, including the extended families, where other families struggled with their jobs and other non-cash assistance such as Medicaid or food stamps in order to provide their children with the essentials of food

and shelter. Sources of income included borrowing money on a regular basis from friends and their own children, whenever the juveniles had any money.

Lack of financial resources resonated throughout other themes as well. The parent's financial situation, for these juveniles became a trigger to their delinquent behavior and an obstacle to social and recreational activities in the company of peers. The juveniles were well aware of the family's financial situation, as informant A stated:

"..cause peoples parents don't want to be spending money like that, just for going out and stuff that, they ain't got the money."

Lack of jobs.

Employment for the unskilled adult has become a serious problem in recent times in the United States. However for the unskilled teenager in the low socio-economic sphere lack of employment creates a critical situation. Child Labor laws in the United States do not allow teenagers younger than 16 to work, with an exemption for those fourteen and up to work during the summer months when school is not in session.

The competition for unskilled labor is fierce, leaving many teenagers on their own to find ways of earning money for their social and recreational needs, including the need

to keep up with the fashion of the streets. The summer jobs available in this community are scarce and only a small percentage of youngsters are selected to participate. In addition, many teenagers don't know where to go to apply for these positions or they don't know anyone to guide them in that direction. To earn money, the juveniles in this study participated in illegal activities such as in the sale of drugs, robbing people for money, stealing cars, as well as maintaining lawful employment. The jobs included working off the books with family members, cleaning offices, or working in fast food establishments. Informant A stated it in this manner:

"Cause you can get no job till you like sixteen...you like thirteen or twelve whatever, you ain't got nothing to do."

Finding the job was part of the battle, maintaining it was another. The juveniles found it hard to take orders, especially if the orders came from a female whom they perceived as easy to get over. They were easily frustrated and quick to react aggressively.

The job also became the tool that kept them clean from the use of drugs, away from the streets, regulated their free time and controlled boredom. In the words of V:

"I started the program, stopped smoking weed, my life goes on, I'm working now, first time I got ta job. I don't believe it. Don't make a lot of money now, but

it ain't what I used to get, but it's better. I'm chilling, staying out of trouble."

Curfew and discipline.

Curfew was impossible to maintain by the parents. The juveniles from an early age discovered that being in the street was exciting and resorted to sneaking out of the house by climbing out of windows, going out the back door, or simply spending the night out and returning home to sleep, at day break. There was pride in their tone of voice as they related how no one has been able to ever tell them what to do. Informant A explains:

" I had to be home when the lights went on ...I go home, but I go back outside...come out the back door...come back home around 12:30(am) or sometimes 2:00(am)."

The juvenile spent time socializing, playing games or conducting illegal activities. Informant A:

"...when I come back outside I go hustle, whatever, or I go do something, go play games or something."

The importance of establishing and enforcing curfew was echoed by SW who reported that many of the children she deals with at Zero Tolerance are ready to fall asleep in school because bedtime may be as late as 1:00 am. Hand in hand with curfew is the setting up of homework time and bedtime. SW describes:

"...students are very late. There's no certain time for homework, there's no certain time for dinner, there's

no certain time for bed, there's no routine! It's, whatever"

For the juveniles, discipline for breaking curfew or any other household rule was delivered by godmothers, aunts, and grandmothers besides the mother. Informant V offers his perception on discipline:

"Like, every other week I get a beating, I try hiding I get a beating. Beating helps...it help me. After awhile you get tired of getting a beating, so you try not to be bad so you won't get a beating."

However, none of the juveniles felt physically abused by any member of the family, although corporal punishment was often the method of choice by the parents. Informant V:

"I ain't never been hit. I got a beating a spanking..."

Family arguments.

Most arguments revolved around curfew, parental requests for the juveniles to stay away from friends, sibling rivalry and the juvenile's lack of compliance for the parents' rules. Violent family arguments resulted in police involvement which at times generated juvenile complaints ranging from simple assault or use of a weapon against a sibling or parent, augmenting a juvenile's record. Informant W:

"My mother like (filed charges)four times...it resulted in coming to court, having to come to court...she picked up an ax handle at me, because she was arguing...I took it from her and I threw it down, and my little niece was standing in my way, and it bounced up, like tapped

her in the wrist. My moms called the cops...so they arrested me for weapons, weapons charge..."

Social service agencies were frequently called upon when settling a family dispute. Not as frequent were psychiatric stays for uncontrollable violent behavior and attempts to hurt self while angry. For W, the self inflicted injuries consisted of fifteen slashes on his arm at the age of eleven; when asked as to his reasons for such action he replied "Cause I was mad". When asked about the details of the incident in question informant W simply replied:

"I don't remember the incident"

That incident, earned him an over night stay in the local children's psychiatric ward.

Interpretation: Informant's family context.

The informants' perceptions illustrate different components affecting their family life. The complexity of the role that different adults play in the lives of the juvenile informants was closely examined. The informants do not differentiate between the concept of family and extended family. The term family for the juvenile applied to the mother, father, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncle, cousins, grandmothers and godmothers. Although the informants' identifications are recognized, the study

chooses to classify the adult actively involved in the juveniles' lives as custodial parent, non-custodial parent, legal guardian, and non-custodial caretaker. Custodial parent refers to the biological parent that not only holds legal custody but also is involved in all aspects of the informant's life, such as setting discipline, going to court, providing shelter and recreation. Non-custodial parent refers to the biological parent who does not hold legal custody and is not fully involved in the life of the juvenile informant. The non-custodial parent can also set discipline, go to court if necessary, provide shelter if needed, and provide opportunities for recreational activities, even if the informant does not find the recreation activity appropriate for his age. Legal guardian refers to the caretaker who holds legal custody, is not the biological parent and is involved in all aspects of the juvenile's life. The legal guardian functions the same as does the custodial parent. The term non-custodial caretaker is applied to the caretaker who does not hold legal custody, is not the biological parent but is involved in some aspects of the juvenile's life, such as in setting discipline, providing shelter and recreational opportunities as needed. The custodial parent seems to be the one involved the most in the juvenile's life, however

regardless of their legal status, all adults involved in the juvenile's life contributed to his development.

The juveniles' lives seem to evolve around the guardian's taxonomy, that is, the guardian's perception of appropriate recreational activities, discipline and curfew and support as they traveled through the legal system. Their relationship with their mother seemed dependent on the status of their guardian, specifically the role of the father and the relationship of that guardian with their mother.

The fathers in this study were non-custodial parents that maintained minimum or sporadic contact with their sons. The juvenile informants seem to have mixed feelings about their fathers. There seem to be both a degree of bitterness for the lack of paternal contact and a sense of longing for the father-son relationship missing in their lives, as well as a sense of perceived freedom the lack of contact provided, since the father was not available to enforce curfews or discipline.

In the absence of the father, the family was left under the care of the mother. The mother received support from other family members such as godmothers and aunts who seem to fill the role as non-custodial caretakers. Impacted

by the father's absence seem to be issues of discipline, curfew, recreation and financial constraints.

Views of the Future

The juveniles' view of the future encompasses their dreams and aspirations as well as uncertainties. The juvenile informants' unresolved legal matters in the Juvenile Justice System, their need to constantly defend their status in the street, the loss of parents to devastating illnesses, their struggles to obtain and keep lawful employment and poor education provoked doubts and raised question about a successful future.

The goals.

None of the juvenile informants indicated a concrete long term goal. They expressed thoughts of accomplishing short term goals, such as completing their GED and finding a job. A juvenile informant awaiting the resolution of his juvenile matter and facing a possible sentence to a medium security juvenile facility, stated his thoughts for his future in this manner. Informant A:

"I see myself as going down to Jamesburg and get home as quick as possible...down in Jamesburg get my GED... come home and try to find a job. Try my cousin to help get a job cause he a manager at Shop Rite or tell my uncle to help me find a job."

There was hopelessness felt in his words when speaking about his chances for a GED, informant A shared his

thoughts about his future:

"... I think the adult center. They was gonna let me take my GED, like on that Tuesday, I got locked up on Saturday...it's too late now."

Perhaps their more imminent worry was the possibility of picking up adult charges. Informant A:

"... 'cause if I get arrested again, I'm gonna have an adult charge and I'm gonna do some time, then when I come out from that, when I do wanna stop hustling, it's gonna be too late and be hard to find a job, 'cause I got an adult record."

An informant who was about to graduate high school had plans to join the Navy. The informant discussed his plan with enthusiasm. Informant M:

"....I tried out for the Navy but I haven't passed the test, but I can keep trying..."

Another informant had lost his job as the research was ending and was planning to move to California to reside with a family member who lived on a military base. Again, he was planning to move without a detailed plan of what he wanted to accomplish and how. He knew one thing: he did not want to go to the county jail as an adult. The informant expressed his thoughts and fears. Informant W:

"I'm trying to take a different path in my life. Instead of being a trouble maker, 'cause I don't wanna go to jail. I'm cared to go to jail, you know..."

Concerns about the adult justice system.

All of the juvenile informants had worries about getting involved in the adult justice system. Although they

had been detained numerous times for offenses such as selling drugs, stealing cars, assaults and others, the juvenile offenders did not want to end up in the adult county jail. They were aware that the offenses they committed as juveniles, if committed as adults, would most probably involve a prison term in the adult prison system.

Informant W expressed his thoughts:

"...I know the consequences...goin' ta jail, you know what I'm sayin', get your freedom taken away, and I don't wanna get my freedom taken away..."

In addition, because they were eighteen year olds still in the Juvenile Justice System, they seem to believe that this was their last chance to make a definite change in their behavior. Informant W offers his perception:

"...all juvenile stuff that I'm going through, right, My, my chances are pretty good for the future, if I don't get arrested pass eighteen."

For another informant, who had vast experience in the rules of the streets and who thought he had survived his many stays at the County Juvenile Detention Center, the adult prison did not scare him. He did not want to pick up any more charges, but felt that he could apply the rules of the streets in the adult system as well. Informant V stated:

"...same thing if I go in there, I'll be alright."

Views on change - An unfamiliar concept.

Given their young age, the informants appeared to be struggling with issues of identity, self image and change. All with the back drop of surviving life in the streets. Their identity appeared to be tied in to the concept of change. Although they were aware that they needed to make changes in their lives, how to accomplish it became a difficult task. Informant V discussed his struggle with the concept of change:

"I know I can change, it's jist that some part of me like is somptin holding me back, right now I don't know what it is that's holding me back. I wanna change, I know I can change, It's jist, I gotta change pretty soon, ah, before I go back to my old ways or someptin..."

The same informant contemplated the possible outcome if he did not embraced change in his life. Informant V his thoughts:

"Can't guarantee ya I'll change, but I change, I gotta a choice, right, if I wanna be alive, right, gotta change."

The informants expressed their desire to change, but the lack of positive reinforcement was missing from their lives, as well as the development of intrinsic motivation.

Informant V explained:

"...but it's like, the more positive things I do, like nobody sees it, so, I just give everybody what they want..everybody thinks I'm the same person, so, if I'm the same person I give 'em what they want."

Role models of those who had made the change from street life were absent from the juvenile lives. Only one of the informants met an adult male who had changed his ways after spending time in prison and converted to the Muslim religion. Informant V related his views on change:

"...I was like damn, this mother fucker changed his fuckin ways, whatever, I can change mine, If I can change out here then I can change getting locked up."

The informants found it difficult to trust the words of those that where not perceived as coming from the streets.

Informant V explained:

"It's like anybody, like who come out of poverty and drugs, you can relate to it...other people that be talking to me they be fake, they be doing it just to do it..."

The support group available to the juveniles consisted of friends and family members, a conflicting situation at best. The juveniles lacked internal reinforces that could assist them to make the change. The strong bonds developed in the streets did not permit an outward display of changed attitudes or views from the juvenile informants. Informant V discussed the inner conflict he faced:

"...see like, it's like, when you trying to change, like, if you out with you friends, you gotta face the same ol'e shit, they'll be mad, they be like, yo, come on what's up, they want you doing what they doing..."

Showing that they were willing to change interfered with street life, a choice the juveniles were not able or willing to take at this point in their lives. Informant V discussed how he dealt with thought of changing:

"..gotta show 'em somethin', but deep down inside, I know I'm changing for the best, whatever, I just don't show everybody that, I just don't show everybody the whole, what's inside of me. I just show 'em fifty fifty."

Family members, especially their mothers were not completely convinced that the change the juveniles were talking about had actually solidified. The juvenile's perception of their mother's view was of disbelief. Mostly, because the juveniles had not changed their social group and this was seen as a magnet to the return to the streets. Informant V explained:

"She thinks that I'll go back out there and do the same thing again. Afraid that when I'm not in Drug Court, I'm jst going to get killed..."

Regrets.

The juveniles did not completely embrace the concept of regret. However, they were able to talk about it in isolated instances. Regret was a concept they were still trying to process at the time of the research. Informant V relates his mixed feelings:

"...If I had never start hustling, probably would've had a scholarship. That's how I got encouraged playing ball, suppose to go ta Tigers, Ferris used to come to

my games when I was in grammar school, they said to stay in school, play ball for 'em, but I start fucking up."

The rules of the street cast a shadow on the responsibility for their illegal actions. The consequences of their actions seen in terms of injuries, loss of liberty, involvement with the legal system and failure to complete school were seen as occurrences that took place in order to survive in the streets.

Turning 18 made them face the possibility of involvement in the adult justice system, of not being able to complete a high school education in terms of a GED and to consider for the first time, the possibility of changing their social group. Informant W regarding his chance to complete high school:

"You know what I'm sayin', you see I coulda been out[of high school] if I ain't mess up....It's probably like the last chance, cause I'm afraid if I don't, if I don't do it now, probably I never do what I wanna do...."

The juveniles used fate and superstitious believes in order to cope with their own set of circumstances. Visiting a friend in "lock up" for example was seen as bad luck, listening to the parent or guardian tell them the possibility of getting arrested for being out in the streets was seen as a "jinx". The belief that things happen for a reason made their actions regarding illegal activity

or violent acts more acceptable. Informant V on the issues of regret and fate:

"Naw, don't regret nothing. Everything I ever done, whatever, I don't regret it, I wish I hadn't done it, but I don't regret it. Everything happen for a reason. I ain't worry about it...if I wasn't a hustler, I wouldn't be here, right now."

Interpretation: Views of the future.

"Sometime, I, I wonder where I'm a turn out, how I'm a turn out, but I gotta wait and see and let time, you know what I'm sayin', gotta wait and see."

The informant's words depict his limited views for the future and a great deal of uncertainty. The informants in general had experienced a great deal of loss in their young lives. There was loss due to absent fathers, the loss of a parent to a devastating illnesses and prison, and the loss of friends to violent events. Their unresolved grief provoked feelings of helplessness and hopelessness for their future. Although the juvenile informant were considered adults they still depended on family members to assist with things such a helping them find employment.

The goals for their future included staying out of trouble, finding a job, and completing high school or obtaining a GED. However, their most imminent goals was escaping adult charges. The degree of concern regarding the adult justice system included 1) fear of being in an

adult jail 2) fear of unemployability due to adult charges and 3) being able to survive just as in the streets.

A future, different from the life they had led up to this point, was tied in to their ability to change. However, change, at least at the time of this research was a difficult task to achieve given their current struggles with issues of identity and self image. Having to survive life in the streets by following the rules of the streets compounded the issue of change for the juvenile informants. Intrinsic motivation was missing in their lives and they still depended on the approval of their peers. In addition, they seem to lack positive male role models that they could identify with and internal reinforcers to assist them with change.

Changing his peer group was still unattainable, even in the case of the informant who had made considerable attempts at change by complying with and successfully completing Drug Court, maintaining a job and not being arrested. His daily survival was perceived as being dependent on his ability to follow the "rules of the streets" and as such made the possibility of change difficult.

CHAPTER V

Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relation between school and community violence. Specifically, this study attempted to identify factors that affect community violence as an agent of school violence and its impact on the climate of the school, by examining the attitude of at-risk students who have come in contact with the Juvenile Justice System.

This chapter discusses the results of the study and offers policy implications and recommendations for further study. The basis for the discussion is the interpretation of the culture of juvenile recidivists in the context of school and community life in an urban area in Northern New Jersey.

Discussion

A qualitative method of data collection in the form of ethnographic interviews was selected given the descriptive and interpretative nature of the study. The taped interviews were later transcribed and the verbatim analyzed

and interpreted. Four male adults, described as juvenile recidivists, still in the juvenile system for offenses committed as juveniles, a social worker and a administrator participated in the study.

The verbatim was taken apart and reset in a collage around broad themes that pertained to school and community violence. The themes discovered became the data to be analyzed and interpreted. The analyzed data provided a window into the lives of the juvenile informants, allowing the researcher to detect patterns and elements pertaining to the topic under study. By analyzing the cases individually, commonalities and differences in the experiences of the informants were allowed to emerge.

This study is not an evaluation of the school district's efforts to manage the issue of school violence, nor is it an evaluation of programs designed by the Department of Juvenile Justice to address and prevent juvenile offenses and its attributes, such as drug and alcohol addictions. The focus of this study is on the impact that community violence has on the functioning of the school district at large. Specific topics were selected to shed light on this impact.

The findings from this research denote the experiences of youngsters having to cope with street life in

conjunction with exercising their right to attain an education.

School Violence

The topic of school violence has been in the forefront of media reporting for the past several years. Law enforcement officials at all levels of government have been perplexed by the many and serious school violent events that have occurred in many on the schools around the nation. In an effort to handle this issue, law enforcement officials have gathered data pertaining to school related violence. The data is used to inform the public about the status of school crime, including school violence.

Debates continue about whether the violence is caused by dynamics in the family, community, school, or Juvenile Justice System, or can be blamed on the availability and profitability of drugs and/or on the dynamics of poverty and capitalism (Anderson, 1999; Cohen, 1998; & O'Donnell, 1999). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2002 report shows that students are safer in school than away from school. The report also indicates that the number of students who were victims of theft decreased from seven percent to four percent between 1995 and 2001. However, there was no significant change from 1993 to 2001 in the percentage of students in grades nine to twelve who

reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property. That figure remained relatively constant between seven and nine percent. Although nonfatal victimization decreased, the percentage of students ages 12 through 18 who reported being bullied in 2001 increased from five percent to eight percent (DeVoe et al., 2002).

In addition, the many factors surrounding violence in general are not always addressed given the complexity of its origins. The debate regarding the funding of social service programs, political and social ideologies coupled with the realities of life being faced by youngsters in the inner city, makes the topic of community and school related violence a complex and controversial issue.

Violence is a community problem that is brought to school by children who may have been exposed to it by their parents and/or by the areas in which they reside (Roth, 1998). Violence can be used as the reaction of choice for some people when trying to release feelings of anger or frustration, to manipulate someone and/or retaliate for pain or hurt caused by others. Violence is a learned behavior which can be changed (American Psychological Association, 1998).

The climate of the school can be affected by many different factors. However for this research, community

violence became the subject to be studied as an agent of school violence.

The School District Under Study

This study was conducted in the second largest urban area in the state of New Jersey. After failing all levels of the state wide monitoring process implemented in January 1984, the local board of education was removed on July 26, 1989 by order of an Administrative Law Judge for failure to provide a thorough and efficient education (*McCarroll v. Board of Education*, 1989). This local school district became the first in the United States to be fully state operated. Poor academic performance, high absenteeism, high drop out rate, inappropriate curriculum, fiscal mismanagement, influence of a strong teacher's union, a sense of strong local political intervention and political favoritism are attributed as causes of the state takeover (Foster, 1992). As of the date of this study, the school district continues to be operated by the State.

The total public school enrollment for the school district under study as of October 15, 2002 was 31,133. The number of students eligible to receive special education services was reported to be 4,520 students. The ethnic breakdown for students on register was as follows: 39.3 percent Hispanic, 36.3 percent Black, 14 percent Asian or

Pacific Islander, 9.5 percent white, and 0.9 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native (Jersey City Public Schools, 2002a).

Zero Tolerance Policy

A zero tolerance policy regarding weapons and violence in schools was implemented in this school district in February 1998. The policy states that any student who carries a weapon to school or uses any item on their person as a weapon to threaten or harm another would immediately be removed from the school building.

The school district set up Zero Tolerance sites that accommodate the students removed from their neighborhood schools due to violent school behavior. The zero tolerance policy also applies to students who commit violent acts against another person or on the school bus (Jersey City Public Schools, 1999).

Socio-economic Background of the Population Under Study

The community in this study is an area of 14.9 square miles in northern New Jersey. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), the City has a household population of 240,055. The median age was established at 32.4 years and the median income was \$37,862.

Twenty seven percent of the children in this population live below the poverty level and 24 percent of

the households in The City received public assistance or non-cash benefits (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Fifty eight percent of the city's population spoke a language other than English at home and of those speaking a language other than English at home, 69 percent spoke Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The unemployment rate for this community in 2001 was 7.7 percent (Educational Law Center, 2002)

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) annual report for 2003 lists New Jersey as the third most expensive state in the nation for renters (Ben-Ali, 2003). NLIHC has determined that the fair market value for this community for an average two bedroom apartment is estimated to be \$ 1,061.00. The NLIHC has also estimated that in this community, 54 percent of the renters are unable to afford the fair market value for an average two bedroom apartment (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2003).

Juvenile's Response to Authority

A child's first exposure to rules is in his/her family life. It is within the family structure that a person learns about social norms, boundaries and how to deal with emotions. However, the male juvenile informants who participated in this study, family life lacked structure, positive role models, the presence of the father, and a stable family environment. In addition, the family's low

socio-economic status prevented the single parent from being able to have the freedom to choose a better neighborhood to help mitigate the multitude of negative influences found in the inner city life.

The juvenile's family life revealed the different types of parents, besides the mother and the father, such as, grandparents, aunts, uncle, foster parents, and godmothers. The different types of parents were involved with the juvenile informants on different levels, filling the parental role, depending on the need and the availability of the biological parent. The juvenile informants were all very concerned about the welfare of their mothers and demonstrated caring and warm feelings toward their mothers. Feelings toward their father were a combination of bitterness and longing. The fathers, at least from the juvenile informants' perspectives, demonstrated an inability to be a consistent role model by their lack of interaction with their sons.

"...I used to see kids with their fathers, I used to ask my mother where my father at, and she say I don't know. Like in school, whatever, go out for a family game, I used to miss my father, but it's al'right."

As the juveniles became older, the lack of paternal presence made the task of setting discipline and curfew an impossibility for the single mother. The juveniles'

behavior deteriorated as they got older and began to conform to life in the streets.

"I can basically do whatever I want. I can stay out as late as I want...'cause I come home late...my pop's not home, that's much better....I wouldn't have as much freedom as I have today..."

In the inner city, the laws that must be obeyed in society and enforced by the police are not, leaving the low socio-economic society open to create and enforce its own rules (Anderson, 1999). For the juvenile informants, having to cope and comply with the rules of the streets made the parenting job a task almost impossible to achieve. Added to this mixture, are the lack of jobs available to youngsters, especially those under the age of sixteen and the amount of free time available to the juveniles.

"...you like 13 or 12 whatever, you ain't got notin to do when it get boring, you ain't gat no job, what you gonna do, stay in the house all day?"

By the end of this study, three of the juveniles had jobs in which they were struggling. They were also dealing with issues such as which authority figure to obey in the absence of their direct supervisor. Female supervisors posed a more difficult situation for the juveniles.

These juveniles did not respond well to authority figures and were defiant to teachers and other school staff. Their perception of an "OK" teacher was connected to the teacher's ability to reach that juvenile, not on an

academic level but on an interpersonal level. The classroom was viewed as the teacher's personal possession, making the interpersonal relationship between the juveniles and the teacher, and not the curriculum, a powerful teaching tool. The strength of the interpersonal relationship, made the difference between attendance and cutting.

"....like the teachers, I ain't like them, I ain't going back to school. That, their class!..."

"..if I enjoy going to that class, then yeah, I'll pay attention, but if I ain't like the teacher, I wouldn't do nottin'"

The juveniles' perceptions regarding the teacher-student relationship are supported by Toby Chuah Feinson (2001), who indicates that when teaching conditions and workload become unmanageable for teachers, the situation raises the level of anxiety creating feelings of neglect and abandonment that are transferred to the relationship with the student. The combination of behavior problems, overcrowded classrooms and the teacher's poor working conditions set an environment of hostility and aggression for all involved (Chuah Feinson, 2001).

The traditional presentation of curriculum did not capture these juveniles' attention; however, the juveniles' disruptive and aggressive school behavior, poor attendance and academic performance precluded their enrollment in the

more interest oriented magnet programs offered by the school district. The juveniles' perception of "attending school" included lateness and attending at least one class, different from the school district's attendance policy, which involved punctuality and attendance to all classes. Circumstances such as getting rearrested and chronic absenteeism prevented the juvenile informants from completing high school.

"...I ain't never been in high school for a full year, either I got suspended or locked up..."

Only one informant appeared as if he may be able to graduate in June.

For these juvenile informants the school became the setting where they socialized with their friends but also settled scores. Negative school behavior was not only an individual reaction to a particular situation but it also became a manner in which the juvenile informant could establish, gain or maintain his status.

School fights were a necessary incident making it possible for the juvenile to develop or increase his reputation. Fighting was perceived as a way to prevent future attacks, show power by bullying others or send a message that they would only fight if confronted. The sense that school officials or police were unable to offer them

protection in school reinforced their behavior and need to follow the rules of the streets while in school.

"...so what I have to do in order for nobody to pick on me, I have to make a little name for myself; let people know what I was about. I don't bother you if you don't bother me, but if you bother me, we gonna fight."

The display of anger in school was triggered by the juvenile's inability to control his emotions when teased, bullied, threatened, when he felt pressured by not being able to perform academically or when he was unable to cope with family dysfunction.

The school district's response to the issue of school violence was to create among other programs, the Zero Tolerance Program that served as the school district's alternative to out of school suspension. Zero Tolerance was designed to minimize the number of days a student would miss instruction. The challenges faced by the program included lack of parental involvement, parents lack of acceptance of their child's difficulties with behavior, not enough time to train the students with conflict resolution skills and no clear follow-up process of the students returned to their neighborhood schools.

The school district's high school with the lowest scores in the HSPA and attendance, and high occurrences of violent events was reconstituted. An Educational

Leadership Team was created that replaced the traditional Principal/Vice-Principal hierarchy. The Educational Leadership Team had a team leader who shared in the decision making process with the rest of the team. The new Educational Leadership Team faced many hurdles, including, high teacher absenteeism, staff dissatisfaction, low morale, high number of special education students as well as a high number of teachers of the handicapped with temporary teacher certification lacking training, high number of substitutes unable to manage the classrooms and the establishment of new security measures such as daily electronic wandering and retraining of security guards.

It took the Educational Leadership Team almost one academic year to see some progress in the control of the building. This was accomplished by removing severe "acting out" students and placing them in a temporary setting designed to address severe acting out behaviors and by transferring other students to other high schools. Previous student behaviors included walking out of class to assemble their friends to settle scores, gathering in the hallways or stairways during class time, frequent and violent acting out behavior, cutting class and irregular attendance.

The high school appears to be host to a number of posses, gangs, and crews, none of which are officially

recognized by the staff. Nonetheless, the staff has been able to some extent to properly manage information that pertained to violent events that occurred in the community by creating interventions that at least prevented violent repercussions from taking place in the school building.

The second phase of the reconstitution of this high school pertains to instruction. This will be taking place next academic year with the support of a grant managed by the local university focusing on teacher training. It remains to be seen if the behavior interventions set in place during the first phase of reconstitution will continue to evolve allowing for the blooming of the second phase, proper delivery of the curriculum.

The return of the students temporarily transferred out during the first phase can be a factor affecting the future of this high school, particularly if the students' behaviors have not changed. In their absence, high school pride being recreated in order to improve the climate of the school. How these returning students will react to the school's effort to improve the school climate remains unpredictable.

Achieving and Maintaining Status and Respect

Fighting was a common event in the lives of the juvenile informants. Status became something that had to be

defended on a constant basis. The violence encountered by the juvenile informants was not random, but the ingredient used to maintain order in their neighborhoods and among different groups. Achieving respect enhanced their sense of self and helped maintain their status which was critical to their survival in the streets. How they were perceived by their peers and others in the streets was of pivotal importance.

The price paid to establish and maintain respect was very high. It included the possibility of injuries, loss of their freedom, or even their lives. The options the juvenile informants confronted when dealing with the issue of status and life in the streets revealed a great deal of hopelessness. Their options were two: 1) fight back taking the risk that a confrontation may escalate to more fighting, including the use of weapons and the issuing of death threats or 2) not fight and run the risk of being subjected to more attacks and loss of status. None of the informants chose not to fight.

Maintaining respect also took place on a collective basis, as in the case of the high school with the perceived reputation of being the toughest in the city having to maintain its standing. Its reputation is maintained with every violent incident that occurs in the building. The

students at the high school had not had a school gun related incident; however, with the shooting at another high school taking place, the boundaries as to where and how to settle scores were expanded. The high school as a collective body needed to maintain its status, and thus the school became the forum for the events that unraveled. A member of the Educational Leadership Team offers his perception:

" The amazing thing about our shooting, was that we almost felt that it was caused by "Lion's high" shooting. It was connected in a sense that, well, if those kids can use guns, then we can use guns as well. It was as if we are as tough as they are and as violent as they are...if there was no Lion shooting, there would not have been a "Tiger high" shooting..."
The juvenile informants did not express a wish to die;

however, death was an acceptable possibility. Death was viewed with detachment and hopelessness. The concern about death, when a death threat was received centered more about when the event would take place and the pain it would cause the mother.

The bond between friends was strong, but second to the bond between family members. The immediate family included brothers, sisters, and parents, included aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and godparents. To be able to protect and defend family and friends was seen as a badge of honor. Regret and guilt developed when an informant was not able

to be present at a violent event to help a friend threatened with death.

"...he knew he was gonna die one day, sooner or later, I should have been there for him or someptin."

For the family of the victim, sometimes security issues carried well into the funeral stages. Secret arrangement had to be made to prevent a grieving moment from turning into a violent event.

In order to survive in the streets, rules must be followed. The informants were well aware of the rules and implemented them. The rules included:

- 1) Making a name for themselves
- 2) Establishing a reputation
- 3) Establishing and maintaining status
- 4) Not divulging their connections
- 5) Developing a strong bond with friends to count on
in time of need
- 6) Attacking only to defend self, family or friends
- 7) Being able to offer protection to their friends and
family
- 8) Accepting the possibility of death
- 9) Choosing family over friends

Parents, even those that do not support street violence

teach the rules of the streets to their children
perpetuating the need for the rules.

"...he tried to attack me so I gotta defend myself,
either way that's what my mother told me since I was
small....I just defend myself, attacking me I gotta hit
you back, simple as that."

Learning to deal with the police and navigate the
judicial system were skills also learned in the streets.
Getting arrested once placed them at higher risk for re-
arrest, whether justly or unjustly. The informants'
perception was that the officers were familiar with them,
making them easy targets when sweeps were made. Perceived
unfair treatment and assumption of guilt contributed to the
general feeling of police mistrust. Perceived police
corruption added to the belief that the police could not be
counted on for protection or fairness, validating their
view on the rules of the streets.

Juvenile boredom not only motivated parents to keep
their children involved with family activities but
motivated the school district to maintain the student's
interest. However boredom remained a factor for continued
use of drugs. Easy access to illegal drugs and familiarity
with illegal substances desensitized the concept of illegal
drug actions as well as its dangers. Unstructured free time
provided the opportunity for the use of drugs as well as

sale of the illegal substances.

The lack of jobs available to teens, especially those in the inner city, provided a justification for those juvenile informants that were involved in the sale of drugs. Their motive was to make money in order to help with the family finances and their personal needs including financing their own drug use. Among other things, some money from their drug profits was spent on candy and clothes.

The county Juvenile Drug Court provided an opportunity for the drug users to seek treatment, helped the juveniles seek legal jobs and enroll in education programs and monitored their free time. The Juvenile Drug Court also provided a ray of hope to an otherwise hopeless outlook on life. Although the struggles with treatment were many, the treatment piece of the Juvenile Drug Court allowed the juveniles to consider their perceived notions of "lock up" or death versus a more positive view including the possibilities for continued employment and education.

The risks associated with the sale of illegal drugs were many including violent events, police arrests, and numerous stays in the county juvenile center. The juvenile's reputation and status were at stake if he was unable to protect the merchandise or his profits, making

the sale of illegal drugs a dangerous trade. Taking these risks also contributed to the enhancement of their reputation and status.

At least with one informant, it was important for the informant to receive praise and confidence from his family and friends. Although the informant successfully completed the Juvenile Drug Court Program, because he required high levels of external rewards lacking in his life at the time of the study, it is uncertain if his struggle with the use and sale of drugs would be a long-term success.

Even though the informants' experiences with the Juvenile Justice System varied from simple assault charges to the sale of illegal drugs, they all experienced detention in the County Juvenile Detention Center. The county juvenile center was perceived as being the same stage as the streets with many of the same actors and the same set of rules. Arrests and fights while in the County Juvenile Detention Center were a way to gain and maintain their status. The reputation earned or gained while in the County Juvenile Detention Center increased their reputation in the streets.

If the juvenile was able to develop a special relationship with a guard by doing "favours," the juvenile was able to accomplish two things: 1) receive special

treatment and privileges 2)enhance his reputation by being able to engage in fights. The "favor," was requested when a guard selected a particular resident to be the object of an altercation. How the guards selected their target, who to ask "favors" from or how widespread the behavior was, was not clear.

"It's like if they don't like that person, they will come to me, like I don't like 'em, do this, do that whatever. I tell 'em what I want and I do it."

For the juvenile involved in completing the "favor," there was a sense of power and control since he was the one who selected how the "favor" would be carried out.

"They just say fuck 'em up. That's it...I start taking off on 'em [the resident], I just start saying things ta 'em like walk up ta 'em and start swinging at 'em...you locked-up shit, you gotta defend yourself."

Not all fights in the County Juvenile Detention Center were associated with a guard's request for a "favor." For some of the residents who were unable to fend off attackers, exposure to continuous taunting, bullying and violent events was an unfortunate reality. As in the streets, the absence of perceived official protection served as a means to perpetuate the rules of the streets.

Juvenile's Perception of the Legal System

Although the juvenile informants were involved with the Juvenile Justice System on several occasions they were

not clear about the role played by each of the parties involved in their case, such as the prosecutor or public defender. The attitude towards the police was of mistrust and frustration. The police was not viewed as an entity that would protect them, but as liars and bullies that used their legal status to intimidate them.

"...it's like they, they, they suppose to be protectin' and servin', but everything that they stand for, they breakin'. The rules that they got and they stand for, they break half of them."

The frustration arose from being frequently labeled as a suspect or charged for offenses they did not perceive they had committed.

The juveniles' perception of the public defender was one of a lesser status official. The public defender was not viewed as an attorney, but as the person appointed to represent them because they did not have money to afford a private lawyer. The informants lacked general understanding of the law. It was difficult for them to accept culpability when in the company of others.

Accepting a plea of guilty because parents wanted to end the case or because they felt pressured by the public defender added to their frustration and animosity towards the legal system. It was unclear from the research data what role the juveniles' lack of knowledge about the law

played in their relationship with their public defender. Their perception about what a "lawyer" could do for them versus what a public defender could do may have been skewed by their lack of knowledge about the intricacies of the law. In addition, the informants perceived that their defense was compromised because the public defender was aware of their reputation and therefore was not interested in their case.

The Future

The juveniles had experienced a great deal of loss and trauma in their young lives: absent fathers, loss of a parent due to devastating illness, and loss of friends to violent community events. Their views for their future were limited by their experiences and their plans marred by hopelessness and helplessness.

"Sometimes, I, I wonder where I'm a turn out, how I'm a turn out, but I gotta wait and see and let time, you know what I'm sayin', gotta wait and see."

Having been through the Juvenile Justice System and

not having had a successful school experience, the

juveniles were content with thoughts of finishing high

school by completing the GED. Nonetheless, only one of the

informants seemed to be on the right track to finish high

school in a neighborhood school. Lacking a concise plan to

achieve their goal, the others were still contemplating

enrollment in the adult educational program.

In considering change, the juveniles explored the

possibility of picking up adult charges resulting in

involvement with the adult justice system and/or a stay in

the County Adult Detention Center, situations they did not

want to experience. Even for those that thought they could

handle it, freedom was preferred.

The informants appeared to be struggling with issues

of identity, self image and change, all with the backdrop

of surviving in the streets. Because their identity was

tied to the concept of change, accomplishing change became

a difficult task to achieve. The juveniles appeared to be

discouraged by the possibility of change. They seemed to

lack intrinsic motivation necessary for the change process

to take place. A situation exacerbated by not receiving

positive reinforcement from their loved ones or friends.

"...but it's like, the more positive thing I do, like

nobody sees it, so, I just give everybody what they

want...everybody thinks I'm the same person, so, if I'm

the same person I give 'em what they want."

Outward display of changed attitudes and views from

the juvenile informants was made difficult by previous

strong bonds developed in the streets.

"...see like, it's like when you trying to change, like, if you got out with you friends, you gotta face the same ol' e shit, they'll be mad, they be like, yo,

come on what's up, they want you doing what they doin'."

Demonstrating change interfered with life in the

streets a choice the juveniles were not able or willing to

take at the time of the study.

"...I gotta show 'em somethin', but deep down inside, I know I'm changing for the best, whatever, I just don't show everybody the whole, what's inside of me. I just show 'em fifty fifty."

The belief that things happen for a reason made their

actions regarding illegal activity or violent acts more

acceptable. The consequences of their actions seen in terms

of injuries, loss of liberty, involvement with the legal

system and failure to complete school were seen as

occurrences that had to take place in order to survive in

the streets.

Implications and Recommendations

The primary message to be drawn from this study is

that violence as it is experienced by juveniles, whether in

the community or in the school is not as random as commonly

believed. Elijah Anderson in his study of south

Philadelphia youth found that the youngsters follow what he

termed the code of the streets (Anderson, 1999). This study

although limited by the specific characteristics of its

participants and specific geographic area, found that the

rules of the streets are followed not only in the

community, but are also carried to places like school and the County Juvenile Detention Center. Therefore, the implications and recommendations of this study apply not only to the community, but also to the school district and the County Juvenile Detention Center.

Implications for the Community

First, the perception shared by the residents of the inner city pertaining to police protection or lack thereof needs to be further examined to address areas of deficiencies. Fostering a sense of protection is seen as a first step necessary to impact the youngsters' perception and diminish their need to have to provide their own protection. The rules of the streets seem to be deeply rooted. As seen in the study, parents, even those that do not support street violence teach the rules of the streets to their children perpetuating the need for the rules. Therefore, law enforcement holds the responsibility of addressing the issue of perception of how their job is performed.

Second, the community leaders and clergy share a responsibility to provide hope to the youngsters growing up in inner city environments by providing alternatives to negative behaviors, such as the sale of illegal drugs. The

creation of job training programs and vocational programs are seen as positive steps necessary to retool inner city youngster for a life that includes hope.

Third, the community social service agencies also have a responsibility to identify and assist needy families in an attempt to provide early intervention to minimize the impact of street life. Students have the right to attend school ready to learn without the distractions and concerns that may cloud their day in school.

Fourth, media shares a responsibility when reporting violent events that occur in the community or schools not to draw on hype but to utilize the event to educate the public regarding the specific violent event. The reporting of violent events should also include a list of possible interventions as measures of prevention and a message of hope.

Implications for the School District

First, early identification of at-risk students in the lower grades is crucial. Early identification of at-risk students allows the school staff to monitor the student's behavior and progress, and at the same time, sends a message to the students that the authority figures in the school are able to provide a safe and structured learning environment; minimizing the chances that the students

resort to following the rules of the streets.

Identification of at-risk students involves the close monitoring not only of behavior patterns but attendance patterns as well. Attendance should be closely followed as early as the pattern becomes noticed even if it falls outside of the boundaries of the mandatory age of school attendance, that is, Kindergarten. It rests upon the teacher to be observant of the developing patterns be it the classroom, cafeteria, or any other school setting.

Second, early identification is to be provided together with intervention. Because many of the students lack conflict resolution skills, a program designed to address the needs of the younger students must be developed. Conflict resolution skills can be incorporated across the curriculum. The study acknowledges that the school district is currently developing a character education program to address the issue of conflict resolution as a precursor to violence; however efforts must be strengthened to insure that students in all grades benefit from such an initiative including younger students. In addition, parental involvement efforts must be included as part of the intervention plan. Parents can play an influential role by supporting their children in developing conflict resolution skills.

Third, the students' need to feel protected must be addressed. The school district needs to re-examine its policies regarding student safety to include the perceptions and concerns of the students. Electronic equipment as an attempt to keep weapons outside of the school building is not enough, policies established to manage and diminish violent school events need to be enforced in a consistent manner. Enforcement of established guidelines will provide the students with a sense that those in authority are providing a secured environment.

Fourth, staff development must include sensitizing teachers to the real fears the students have regarding their safety. Awareness of the students' feelings may help establish a better relationship between the students and the teachers. Given the immaturity many students experience, it behooves teachers to become well aware of how they come across to students. It is clear, that students look up to teachers and that the student-teacher relationship is a powerful vehicle which can be used to deliver the academic curriculum in a school district struggling with low testing scores. Training teachers to recognize their anger as well as that of their students as an appropriate emotion to be discussed in class can improve the climate of the classroom and school at large. Teacher

training should be designed in a series of workshops rather than just a day of training. This serves to demonstrate a sustained effort on the part of the school district to address the issue of school violence.

Fifth, effective teacher training should be included as part of teacher preparation programs. Those preparing to become teachers should be well trained in the areas of early intervention and its benefits as it pertains to violence prevention.

Sixth, at the secondary level, the high schools are highly affected by the reentry of students who have spent time in the County Juvenile Detention Center, drug treatment centers and Juvenile Justice Commission facilities, bringing back with them various degrees of unresolved difficulties. The school district needs to re-examine its policy for the re-enrollment of these students to include a highly structured and therapeutic program addressing the specific needs of this population in order to allow for a smoother transition to school.

The school district has many alternative education programs, magnet programs and other services and innovative programs in place created as a response to the changing needs of the student body. However, the impact of the rules of the streets in this school district requires a still

higher degree of involvement and commitment. Although the school district was not the target of this study, the efforts the school district is making can not be overlooked. An asset the school district has is the ongoing intervention and support of the Inter-Agency Task Force, a body that can perhaps assist in the design of a re-entry program for students who are moderately to severely involve with the Juvenile Justice System.

Implications for the Mental Health Community

Given the socially and emotionally complex background of the students who are involved in violent events, the mental health community must work in partnership with the school district to address some of the issues of loss and anger that affect these students. This study recognizes that traditionally school districts do not "treat", however given the nature of the problem at hand which affects not only the student body at large but also the staff, an effort of collaboration with the mental health community can only enhance and support the efforts made by school districts to address the issue of violence. As community centers, the modern school should open its doors to the services of mental health providers, especially given the disturbing indication of lack of remorse shown by the informants in the study suggesting that sensitivity issues

regarding involvement with violence must be addressed.

Implications for the County Juvenile Detention Center

The implications are also directly connected to the juveniles' perception of safety and order while in the County Juvenile Detention Center.

First, although the County Juvenile Detention Center was not the object of this study, disturbing incidents emerged which indicate that even if it only involved one instance, it is worth a review of practices by those who are in charge of the safety of the juveniles while in detention.

Second, the management of the County Juvenile Detention Center needs to assess the relationship the juveniles have with the guards and determine if in fact there are indications of abuse of power as related by the informants. The juveniles are detained for offenses they committed, but they also deserve to be in a facility that assures their safety, especially since they are minors.

Third, the juveniles' perception that their safety is in their own hands, makes for fertile ground to continue breeding the rules of the streets. Therefore, developing the perception that the juvenile detention facility is capable of providing a safe stay is of utmost importance.

Implications for the Juvenile Justice System

First, given the juveniles' immaturity and in many instances their learning difficulties, the public defenders need to be well aware that the juveniles lack full understanding of the proceedings and of the responsibilities of the different parties involved in their legal case. The juveniles' desire to finish with the case leads to decision that impact on their future, such as pleading guilty and receiving a term of probation keeping the juvenile within the boundaries of the legal system. Judges also hold a responsibility by making sure that the juvenile is able to comprehend the intricacies of the proceedings.

Second, the Juvenile Justice System needs to re-examine its policies and programs to include job training, continued education, and counseling to juveniles involved in the system.

Third, the juveniles' perception of the Juvenile Justice System and how the system can assist them, requires a well deserved look.

It appears that the rules of the streets are not just in effect in the community but are implemented and resorted to in situations when the youngsters perceive that safety is left up to them. Therefore, to reduce the impact of the

rules of the streets, the community, school and Juvenile Justice System have to work in partnership to face the challenges and provide the youngsters in the inner city not only with a sense of protection but with the necessary tools to develop and maintain a sense of hope.

Policy Recommendations

First, continue funding violence prevention and intervention programs by state and federal government, including funds that address staff training.

Second, Federal and state government to mandate uniform reporting of school related violent events by law enforcement and the educational system.

Third, Federal and state government to increase funding for the creation of after school programs that promote the development of job training skills for students starting at age twelve.

Fourth, current child labor laws preclude for the employment of youth younger than sixteen, a situation that may contribute to the helplessness and hopelessness experienced by the impoverished inner city youth. Therefore, it behooves lawmakers to review the child labor laws to allow for the development of closely monitored paid apprenticeships that will provide not only vocational skills but hope for the troubled inner city youth.

Fifth, funding to be provided for the creation of paid apprenticeships through the Department of Labor and in partnership with the educational system to assist inner city youth develop work skills.

Sixth, promote partnerships with the private business sector to provide at-risk youth with the opportunity to experience and learn new skills.

Directions for Future Research

Because the study involved one specific community the results must be viewed with caution when generalizing to other communities and school districts. It is not known if the rules of the streets are implemented in other areas besides the inner city. Therefore, it is recommended that a study involving other communities be conducted to address in detail the conditions under which a youngster feels the need to resort to the rules of the streets.

This study recognizes that in contrast with the culture of the juvenile informants that were selected as participants there are other inner city students who do not engage in community or school violence and are able to be successful in school. These resilient students are able to survive the violence and struggles that they must contend with sometimes on a daily basis, therefore research is needed to address the issue of resiliency in depth and how

it positively impacts on the socio-emotional development of inner city youth.

Research is needed to address how to dismantle or minimize the role and impact the rules of the street play in the lives of inner city youngsters.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sample Letter of Solicitation to the Administrator

Martha Santiago
P.O. Box 3227
Weehawken, NJ 07086

Letter Of Solicitation For The Administrator
Interviews on Community and School Violence

December 15, 2001

Dr. Charles T. Epps, Jr.
State District Superintendent
Jersey City Public Schools
346 Claremont Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07305

Dear Dr. Epps:

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, working under the mentorship of Juan Cobarrubias, Ph.D. The Zero Tolerance Program, which operates under your leadership, has been selected due to its innovation and acclaimed success in dealing with youngsters who have a history of violent school behavior and contact with the Juvenile Justice System. I am respectfully requesting your permission to allow me to address those students who are or have been involved in the Zero Tolerance Program and are eighteen years old, as well as, program staff with the topic of my dissertation. This research will not evaluate your program.

My doctoral dissertation research deals with the topic of community and school violence, as seen through the eyes of eighteen year olds, with a history of aggressive behavior and who have had contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Where possible, program staff input will also be requested. Each subject is expected to participate in this research a total of about four hours. Under 2A:4A-22 of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice an eighteen year old is considered an adult.

I will be asking the potential participants to volunteer.

Each subject will participate in a series of about four interviews, approximately one hour each to address the following topics:

- community and school violence
- family issues
- availability of community services
- school climate
- experiences with the Juvenile Justice System

The interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data. No individual will be identified other than by a pseudo-name. The responses of all the participants will be combined in the presentation of the data. All participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interviews will take place at the program site.

The subject's data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of the research all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants will be completely destroyed.

I will contact you by telephone in the next few days to follow-up this request for an opportunity to address the eighteen year olds in your program, as well as program staff. I am available to answer any questions you may have concerning this study.

Your cooperation will offer this researcher a unique opportunity to add to the existing research on the topic of community and school violence. Thanking you in advance for your kind attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Appendix B

Sample Letter of Solicitation to the Program Administrator

Martha Santiago
P.O. Box 3227
Weehawken, NJ 07086

Letter Of Solicitation For The Program Administrator
Interviews on Community and School Violence

January 11, 2002

Dr. Joanne P. Kenny
Associate Superintendent
Jersey City Public Schools
346 Claremont Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07305

Dear Dr. Kenny:

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, working under the mentorship of Juan Cobarrubias, Ph.D. The Zero Tolerance Program, which operates under your leadership, has been selected due to its innovation and acclaimed success in dealing with youngsters who have a history of violent school behavior and contact with the Juvenile Justice System.

Dr. Charles T. Epps has granted me permission to conduct my study in the Jersey City Public Schools. However, I am also respectfully requesting your permission to allow me to address those students who are or have been involved in the Zero Tolerance Program and are eighteen years old, as well as, program staff with the topic of my dissertation. This research will not evaluate your program.

My doctoral dissertation research deals with the topic of community and school violence, as seen through the eyes of eighteen year olds, with a history of aggressive behavior and who have had contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Where possible, program staff input will also be requested. Each subject is expected to participate in this research a total of about four hours. Under 2A:4A-22 of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice an eighteen year old is considered an adult.

I will be asking the potential participants to volunteer.

Each subject will participate in a series of about four interviews, approximately one hour each to address the following topics:

- community and school violence
- family issues
- availability of community services
- school climate
- experiences with the Juvenile Justice System

The interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data. No individual will be identified other than by a pseudo-name. The responses of all the participants will be combined in the presentation of the data. All participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interviews will take place at the program site.

The subject's data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of the research all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants will be completely destroyed.

I will contact you by telephone in the next few days to follow-up this request for an opportunity to address the eighteen year olds in your program, as well as program staff. I am available to answer any questions you may have concerning this study.

Your cooperation will offer this researcher a unique opportunity to add to the existing research on the topic of community and school violence. Thanking you in advance for your kind attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Appendix C

Sample Letter to Participants

Martha Santiago
973-761-9394

Letter Of Solicitation For The Participants
Interviews on Community and School Violence

Dear participant:

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, working under the mentorship of Juan Cobarrubias, Ph.D.

My doctoral dissertation research deals with the topic of community and school violence, as seen mainly through the eyes of eighteen year olds, with a history of aggressive behavior and who have had contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Under 2A:4A-22 of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice, an eighteen year old is considered an adult. Where possible, program staff input will also be requested. Each subject is expected to participate in this research a total of about four hours.

Each subject will participate in a series of about four interviews, approximately one hour each to address the following topics:

- community and school violence
- family issues
- availability of community services
- school climate
- experiences with the Juvenile Justice System

As an eighteen year old program participant or program staff, you may volunteer to take part in a research study dealing with community and school violence. Your insight, and experiences provide invaluable information. All participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty of any type.

Results of this research will not be part of your record nor will it be disclosed to any program or individual. It is strictly confidential.

The interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data. No individual will be

identified other than by a pseudo-name. The responses of all the participants will be combined in the presentation of the data.

The subject's data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of the research all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants will be completely destroyed.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through at (973) 275-2974.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will gladly forward to you the aggregated results of the completed study.

I will contact you by telephone in the next few days to follow-up this request for participation in this study. I am available to answer any questions you may have concerning this study.

By consenting to participate in this study, you will have a unique opportunity to add to the existing research on the topic of community and school violence. Thanking you in advance for your kind attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Appendix D
Sample of Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form
Interviews on Community and School Violence

1. Researcher's Affiliation:

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, working under the mentorship of Juan Cobarrubias, Ph.D.

2. Purpose of the Research:

This doctoral dissertation research deals with the topic of community and school violence, as seen mainly through the eyes of eighteen year olds, with a history of aggressive behavior and who have had contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Under 2A:4A-22 of the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice, an eighteen year old is considered an adult. Where possible, program staff input will also be requested. Each subject is expected to participate in this research a total of about four hours.

3. Description of the Procedures to be Followed:

Each subject will participate in a series of about four interviews, approximately one hour each to address the following topics:

- community and school violence
- family issues
- availability of community services
- school climate
- experiences with the Juvenile Justice System

4. Statement of the Voluntary Nature of the Study:

As an eighteen year old program participant or program staff, you may volunteer to take part in a research study dealing with community and school violence. Your insight, and experiences provide invaluable information. All participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty of any type.

5. Statement of Anonymity:

The interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data. No individual will be identified other than by a pseudo-name. The responses of all the participants will be combined in the presentation of the data.

6. Security of Subject's Data:
The subject's data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality.
7. Confidentiality of Records:
Upon completion of the research, all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants will be completely destroyed. Only the researcher and her advisor will have access to research records.
8. Possible Risks or Discomfort to the Participants:
There are no anticipated risks to the participants during the course of this study. This study does not involve the use of any medical treatment or psychological procedures.
9. Benefits to the Participants:
By consenting to participate in this study, you will have a unique opportunity to add to the existing research on the topic of community and school violence. There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study.
10. Associated Risks:
This activity is not expected to cause undue stress or psychological harm to the participant. However, if this activity causes undue stress, the participant is urged to seek the assistance of the program social worker. The participant may also seek counseling at usual and customary fees at the local community mental health center.
11. Disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment that might be advantageous to the subject:
This is not applicable to this research. This study does not involve the use of any medical treatment or psychological procedures.
12. Who to Contact with Questions About the Research:
You may contact Martha Santiago at 973-761-9394 with any questions concerning this study.

13. Taped Interviews:

By participating in this study, you will be giving consent to the use of taped interviews. You may review any portion of the tape(s) and you may request that any portion of the tape(s) be destroyed. Upon completion of the study, all tapes will be destroyed. The transcribed verbatim will be maintained for three years.

14. Internal Review Board Approval:

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through at (973) 275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

The participant has been provided with a copy of this Informed Consent

Participant _____

Date _____

I will gladly forward to you the aggregated results of the completed study, if you provide your mailing address below.

____ I would like to receive a copy of the aggregated results upon completion of the study. Please mail to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Appendix E
Sample of Interview Questions

SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(This is only a sample of some of the questions asked participants, since ethnographic methodology precludes the use of a previously prepared questionnaire.)

1. Can you describe to me what is your day like?
2. Are you employed at the present time?
3. What type of educational program or training program are you in at the present time?
4. What do you think makes kids get in trouble?
5. Can you describe to me how discipline was set in your home?
6. How often were you disciplined at home?
7. Can you describe your relationship with your dad?
8. What do you think causes a kid to become delinquent?
9. In your experience, how violent is the school environment?
10. What do you think can be done in school to prevent some of the violent school incidents?
11. Do you think the zero tolerance policy is helping kids become less violent?
12. Are you involved with the court system and if so, can you tell me how you became involved?
13. What do you think caused you to become delinquent?
14. Have you ever tried drugs?
15. What is/was your drug of choice?
16. How old were you when you first tried drugs?
17. Why do you think kids use drugs?
18. How important is obtaining an education to you?
19. Was your guidance counselor or any other school staff helpful during your troubled times?
20. Now that you are 18 and considered an adult by law, do you think your behavior will change? How do you think it will change?